

WOMEN IN VOLUNTARY SERVICE ASSOCIATIONS:
VALUES AND MEANINGS

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For MKG whose arrival ensured timely delivery of this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

Sarah Katheryn Nathan

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SERVICE ASSOCIATIONS: VALUES AND MEANINGS

This study examines the essential features of women's experiences as members of a service association. It uses a qualitative method to understand how women make meaning from their membership in an all-female association and a mixed-gender association. The experiences were examined in comparative contexts. The study finds three common features in each association: joining, volunteering, and leading. In the mixed-gender association, women also experienced a process of assimilating into membership activities. The study provides scholars and association practitioners insights into the complex blend of members' personal and professional interests with implications for membership recruitment and retention.

Robert W. White, Ph.D., Chair

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This isn't your mother's charity. This isn't your father's club. These statements describe two well-known service associations that have each existed for over 100 years as they seek to attract and retain members of the twenty-first century. Junior League, a women's association, is shedding its elitist image as a “pearls and white glove social organization” to harness the energies of a new generation of women who have grown up volunteering (Banjo 2010). Rotary International, a stalwart of the “old boys' club” until it began admitting women in 1987, has similarly sought new ways of attracting members while staying true to its high business standards. As membership-based associations, these two organizations reflect larger changes in the association landscape and in the social world of their members.

Women have organized themselves into formal and informal associations to accomplish civic projects since the earliest days of the American republic (Cott 1987; McCarthy 2003; Scott 1991). Since men dominated public life, they did not adopt voluntary, service-based associations until the increasing consciousness of the middle class prompted businessmen to organize in the early 1900s as a response to a changing market economy (Charles 1993). Junior League, an association begun by New York debutantes interested in social work, was formed in 1901. Rotary International, an association for businessmen established in 1905, sparked a larger movement of men's service clubs. Both associations – and many like them – continue today, although they have changed over time in response to larger social changes. Most notably, Rotary International now includes women as members. Junior League, according to its mission to empower women to become civic leaders, continues its female-only status.

Women in Junior League have been working together to solve community problems for over 100 years. Women in Rotary have joined their male counterparts in a similar mission for the last twenty-five years. The goal of this study was to generate more information about the experiences of women in both mixed-gender and all-female service associations. What are their experiences in these associations? And what meanings do women give their volunteerism? To this end, the project's direction is succinctly explained in the remainder of this chapter, including the statement of the problem, purpose, study significance, research questions and design, and definition of key concepts. This chapter concludes with a brief overview of the dissertation.

Problem Statement

Voluntary associations broadly represent a diverse group of organizations, activities, people, and interests. Such organizations play important societal roles from political advocacy to mobilizing local volunteers. Member-serving groups such as mutual benefit organizations, fraternal groups, and service clubs are underrepresented in nonprofit research (O'Neil 1994). Scholars generally approach voluntary associations from historical perspectives (Beito 2000; Kaufman 2004), through organizational theory (McPherson and Rotolo 1996), or by emphasizing individual determinants of group membership (Smith 1994). What is missing is an understanding of the meanings and values women – and men – attribute to participation in voluntary associations.

Regarding women's philanthropic behaviors, women of all income levels are more likely to give than men and most female-led households almost always give more in actual dollars (Mesch 2010). Women also generally volunteer more than men. In 2010, 36 million American women volunteered, compared to 26.8 million men. Women

contributed one billion more hours of volunteer service than did men (Corporation for National and Community Service 2010). However, regarding membership in associations, women participate in fewer formal associations and smaller associations than do men (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982). This participation pattern suggests women are less exposed to greater connections across a community – especially the business community – and generally inhibits women’s access to and development of formal networks (Lin 2000).

While research on the philanthropic behavior of women grows, research on their experience in service associations in particular is limited. Where research exists, it focuses on quantitative measurements of gender disparities and social capital; such studies cannot reveal the experiences of women in their own words. This phenomenological study brings to light women’s voices and enhances our understandings of volunteerism and associationalism through service associations.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into women’s experiences as volunteers and members in service associations. In particular, women’s experiences were examined in a comparative context by age and association type.

Study Significance

Over the last thirty years, scholars and practitioners have raised concerns that association membership in the United States is declining at such a rate that we are losing a unique American trait. For those in the business of association management, the declining membership trend is especially alarming and has sparked a number of publications with equally alarming titles such as “Race for Relevance” (Coerver and

Byers 2011) and “The End of Membership as We Know It” (Sladek 2011). Such publications, for the most part, are well intentioned and based on years of practical experience. They are not, however, based on rigorous research.

While it is true that some associations have seen major declines in membership, the call to arms suggested by such publications is perhaps premature or at least misplaced. Dalton and Dignam (2007), in the largest survey of association members and nonmembers, found that members acquire great worth from their association membership, so much so they are likely to recommend it to others, an important recruiting tool. Their report provides the most comprehensive look at members’ impressions and perceptions of associations today. Coupled with other research that shows younger professionals are just as likely to join associations, even if at a slower rate (Brooks 2006), the alarmist tendencies of association practitioners might better be channeled towards more productive research questions and management strategies.

There is no doubt that social life has changed dramatically since the “golden age” of “traditional” membership associations. From rapid technological innovation to women’s increasing presence in the paid labor force, associations face new challenges. Service associations, like the two included in this study, provide a unique window on associational behavior. They are not strictly professional or trade-based associations, nor are they single-issue associations, as are most commonly studied and the focus of management manuals. Instead, service associations, as voluntary groups of mostly professionals interested in community service, provide insights into the nature of collective volunteering. Consequently, this study provides insights into women’s evolving motivations for joining, patterns of membership, and understandings of service

as experienced through service associations. This study also offers insight into membership organizations more broadly: who is joining and staying, how members' interests are identified and addressed, and the meanings of membership. Because "the factors that explain member entry may not be the same ones that explain member retention and active participation" (Tschirhart 2006:531), findings suggest practical applications for both membership recruitment and retention strategies.

Research Questions and Design

This phenomenological study examines women's experiences in both traditionally-male clubs and all-female clubs and asks: What meanings do women give their volunteerism? What do these meanings tell us about how women view their role in predominately male domains? What are the differences and similarities between traditionally-male versus all-female service clubs? Because current quantitative measures of women's giving and volunteering do not account for contextual differences such as members' age, length of membership, or clubs' size, this study enhances our understanding of associational membership through women's lived experiences.

A qualitative, phenomenological design was used for this study. A phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows examination and description of the phenomenon in the words of the participants themselves. In particular, phenomenology, as an interpretive and descriptive approach, transforms women's "lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" (Van Manen 1990:36). Twenty-six women were interviewed using a semi-structured protocol: nineteen women from Junior League and nine from Rotary Clubs (two participants experienced both phenomenon and

are counted in both sub-groups). A full description of the study methods and procedures for data analysis are included in chapter three.

Definition of Key Concepts

The study examined the experiences of women in mixed-gender and all-female voluntary associations. Three concepts are of particular importance: service associations, volunteerism, and lived experience.

Service associations: Legally, there is no one category of member-based, nonprofit, voluntary associations. In this study, service clubs and service associations are terms used interchangeably. Voluntary associations generally are formally-organized groups comprised of individuals not financially compensated for their participation (Tschirhart 2006). Historically, service associations were civic organizations of individuals, often white-collar professionals, with a primary mission of community service (Charles 1993). In the three major international associations – Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary – service clubs are hierarchically structured with an international governing body and local clubs organized by region. Some clubs use a classification system of membership (one member from each business or business sector in the community), although others do not. At their core, all of these clubs, including Junior League, share a commitment to volunteerism and community service.

Volunteerism: Volunteer work is formal (as opposed to informal, care work), public and unpaid. It is not just “unpaid labor that is appropriately motivated” (Musick and Wilson 2008:16); volunteers can reap benefits, so long as the benefits are not the primary reasons for doing the work. Most scholarly work on volunteerism does not include membership in voluntary associations such as service clubs, although it is highly

likely that volunteer work done through such associations is recorded in annual volunteer data trends. Perhaps most telling is that members of service associations would themselves categorize their membership as an act of volunteerism, as will be further revealed in the findings.

Lived Experience: As the cornerstone of the phenomenological approach, women's lived experience is of interest to this study. The lived experience captures and describes "how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Patton 2002:104). Through interviews, the research uncovers individuals' first hand experiences in their own words, rather than presented through second-hand accounts.

Dissertation Overview

The next chapter reviews the relevant theory and literature used in this study. Specifically, a brief history of service associations, women's charitable giving, volunteering, and participation in voluntary associations are examined. Chapter three focuses on the study design, data analysis procedures, and includes sections on researcher bias and theoretical framework. The descriptive findings are presented in chapters four and five. Chapter six discusses the study's conclusions and implications. Together these chapters present the final report on women's experiences in service associations.

CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Women in the United States have always used voluntary associations to both accomplish civic projects about which they cared and to define and redefine a public space for their activities (Scott 1991). To understand these activities in historical and contemporary contexts, this chapter explores the literature of two phenomena that drive the study's purpose: associational activity and volunteering. First, associations as a broad category of research are briefly examined followed by a closer look at women's associational behaviors. Next, psychological and sociological theories of volunteering are explored, followed by a deeper look at the rates and experiences of women as volunteers. In combining these phenomena, and in addition to the purposes described in the previous chapter, the need for this research on women's experiences in service associations is made explicit.

Associations

Broadly defined, associations are formally organized groups comprised of individuals not financially compensated for their participation (Tschirhart 2006). Associations are often held in esteem as unique features of American society. They are credited as "solid training grounds for leadership and self-government," and as providers of community service that give "expression to habits of character and thought devoted to larger public concerns" (*The Value of Associations* 1990: 9). While associations are most often designed to meet the needs and interest of its members, they are also places where individuals come together to pursue some collective interest be it community service, fellowship with the like-minded, or common business practices.

While associations and joining behaviors have long been studied by sociologists, scholars since the 1980s have acknowledged that “association research remains a largely unintegrated set of disparate findings, in dire need of a compelling theory to force greater coherence upon the enterprise” (Knoke 1986:2). Because service association membership is at the intersection of giving, volunteering, and associational behavior, research about them does not fit in any one pre-existing domain of nonprofit or philanthropic studies research. Much of the existing research focuses on “joining processes” and “participatory consequences,” but far fewer studies examine what members experience once they have joined (Knoke 1986). The individual level analysis presented in the present study provides just one approach to uncovering how membership is experienced.

Recently, some scholars and association management executives have raised concerns about the rapid decline of individuals joining membership associations of all kinds, from professional to civic organizations. Declining membership has been attributed to rapidly changing demographics, an increasingly diverse society (Faulkner 2005), the rise of long commutes, suburban living, and women’s increased presence in the workforce (Putnam 2000). The decline of “traditional” members has required associations to adjust their mission or programming to attract and meet the needs of new and younger members (Faulkner 2005; Junker 2007). These authors, especially those in the business of association management, worry that a decline of association membership may mean the loss of a unique characteristic of American social life.

Similarly, association management professionals, based on years of experience in the field, but not strong empirical data, have claimed that the association model has changed so significantly that we are facing “the end of membership as we know it”

(Sladek 2011; Coerver and Byers 2011). Association managers are challenged to restructure their governance and committee structures, utilize technology differently, and revamp programming in the struggle to stay relevant to current and potential members (Coerver and Byers 2011). However, much of the alarmist hype is not supported by available data.

Additionally, not all scholars agree that the decline in “traditional” membership organizations is entirely a bad thing. There is reason to believe that individuals born after 1965 – “Generation X” – are eager to join membership associations, especially business associations that afford ample opportunity for professional networking (Junker 2007). Membership may be more based on one’s career stage than fixed generational attributes; entry-level professionals just may be slower to join than those in their mid career (Dalton and Dignam 2007). Others note that while old-style associations may be in decline, new associations come into existence to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse society such as new immigrant groups. And, while some traditional service associations have had more difficulty attracting young professionals, it does not necessarily mean this demographic is not interested in service. Instead, young adults may be finding new outlets for their civic activity such as giving circles or other young professional groups related to specific nonprofit organizations. A decline in formally-organized associations may trigger the creation of more informal associations such as book clubs and self-help groups.

Women in Associations

From benevolent societies in the earliest days of the republic to the women’s suffrage movement, to the creation of schools, parks and museums, women have a long

history of organizing formal and informal groups to achieve civic goals (Scott 1991). The first women's charities created political and economic space for female enterprise, challenged misogynist stereotypes, and forged a feminized version of the republican credo of public service, personal sacrifice and individual virtue. Before women participated in the paid labor market, their volunteerism constituted a "parallel female empire of philanthropy" (McCarthy 2003:31).

As women began to join the paid labor force in the late 1800s, several national women's clubs were established. These professional associations, in fact, pre-date men's professional clubs. For example, Sorosis was the first club of professional women created in 1868 in response to women's exclusion from the New York Press Club. It was followed by hundreds of local clubs eventually organized into the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1890. The National Federation of Business and Professional Women (NFBPW), established in 1919, brought together successful business women to foster collective influence not afforded professional women individually. Clubs associated with NFBPW were required to have 75% of its members employed; nearly half of those women in the 1920s and 1930s worked in clerical positions. Urban career women leaned towards joining City Clubs that emphasized involvement in city politics and lobbying on behalf of issues in which they believed (Cott 1987). Discussed in greater depth in chapter four, non-working, socialite women also joined together to educate themselves in a desire to address social issues. With community improvement in mind, the Junior League, comprised of affluent debutantes interested in the settlement house movement, began in New York in 1901 and quickly spread throughout the country.

Although women's clubs thrived throughout most of the twentieth century, by the 1980s clubs saw membership declining as traditional members aged and they struggled to attract younger members (Kobren 1991). Gibbs and Lafferty (1998) observed that clubs had:

become victims of their own success: by realizing their mission, they invite their demise Women's clubs are no longer the primary path to fulfillment or power. Where they once provided an invaluable network of contacts and company, they must now compete with single-issue organizations, professional groups and even men's clubs.

As more and more women traded volunteer work for full-time employment, associations exchanged day-time activities for evening meetings. Kobren (1991) reported that the Junior League in Baltimore, for example, initiated a program to recruit "all interested women aged 21 to 45" and replaced some of the mundane, clerical volunteer projects with more community-oriented work in which members could see their impact. Associations continued to adapt with a mix of flexible programs, high-profile community service, and opportunities for personal growth.

Not fully reviewed here, the history of women's use of voluntary associations is long and reflects the social and cultural changes of women's lives. The changing nature of women's associations in the 1980s and 1990s mirrored new social contexts in which members and potential members, with competing association options, balance career, family, and volunteer aspirations. Given the new associational environment for women, scholars began to examine more closely gender differences in associational life.

Quantitative comparisons suggest that women participate in fewer formal associations than men. Among the first study to examine the differences in associational rates between men and women, McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982) found that the size

of organization significantly matters – men’s organizations are on average three times the size of women’s. This finding suggests women are less exposed to greater connections across a community, especially the business community. Their analysis is specific to men’s-only and women’s-only associations, excluding any kind of mixed-gender association. The authors point out, correctly, that the size difference may be because women often belong to the women’s auxiliaries of men’s groups that were popular through most of the twentieth century.

Analyses of work histories indicate that stable employment is related to more memberships in voluntary groups. For men, regular employment affected only memberships in job-related associations, whereas women’s employment patterns affected a much wider range of membership types (Rotolo and Wilson 2003). We also know that women participate in smaller voluntary organizations than men and that these organizations are generally “domestic” in nature (relating to family, schools, and church rather than business), which generally inhibits women’s access to and development of instrumental social capital (Lin 2000). Men and women may equally join associations, but women are much more likely to belong to sex-segregated groups than men; women are less likely to belong to gender-integrated voluntary associations (Popielarz 1999).

Noris and Inglehart (1993) sought to understand gender disparities in social capital using structural, cultural and agency explanations. Structural differences refer to the barriers related to gender that prohibit women’s participation in associational life, notably the demands of both employment and housework. Cultural explanations refer to the personal beliefs, attitudes, and norms individuals bring to civic participation. The connection between culture and civic engagement helps explain that while it is illegal to

exclude women from civic clubs, many remain gender-segregated in function. Finally, agency accounts refer to the phenomenon of informal networks pulling individuals into formal group participation. Norris and Inglehart (1993) conclude that men and women are civically engaged at almost equal amounts, but their association is horizontally segregated. Although women have more access to formal, instrumental associations due to their increased presence in the labor force, men still have the advantage in benefiting from associational life (Knoke 1986).

Two particular associations are examined in this study and are further described in the following chapters. Briefly, Rotary International is a mixed-gender association that was all-male for its first eighty-two years of existence. As of June 2012, 215,207 women belonged to Rotary International worldwide, at 17.69%, still a small minority of total membership (Rotary International 2012). Junior League has remained an all-women's association since it began in 1901. Today, 155,000 women belong to 292 Leagues in four countries (Association of Junior Leagues International 2012). Examining the experiences of women in these associations will contribute a descriptive understanding of how women use and make meaning from their membership.

Volunteering

As defined in the previous chapter, volunteer work is formal, public, and unpaid; volunteers can reap benefits, so long as the benefits are not the primary reasons for doing the work (Musick and Wilson 2008). Volunteering depends on the social context in which it is performed although it does not include membership in voluntary associations such as service clubs. What is important for the present study is that members volunteer in a variety of ways with and through their association. In other words, as part of her

membership, an individual may provide community volunteerism alongside her fellow members (external volunteering) or provide a volunteer service through her participation as a board member or committee chair (internal volunteering).

According to data collected annually by the Corporation for National and Community Service, women generally volunteer more than men. In 2010, 36 million American women volunteered, compared to 26.8 million men. Women contributed one billion more hours of volunteer service than did men (4.7 billion to 3.4 billion respectively). Women, especially married women between the ages of forty-five and fifty-four, are credited with the largest increase in volunteering since 2003 (Corporation for National and Community Service 2010). In 2011, the annual survey found that parents volunteer at a higher rate than the national average and that working mothers in particular volunteer at a rate of 4 in 10 (Corporation for National and Community Service 2012). A similar percentage of older women aged 50 to 80 have been found to actively participate in some volunteer work (Bowen, Anderson, and Urban 2000). The volunteering recorded by the Corporation for National and Community Service includes volunteering that individuals complete through membership in a civic association (such as a service club) and alongside fellow members.

Although scholars have attempted to determine if men or women volunteer more, actual evidence is inconclusive. There may be differences in the variables that cause men's and women's volunteering, but Einolf (2001) suggests there is little difference in actual volunteer behavior. Women score higher on prosocial characteristics that are associated with a higher motivation to volunteer than men. They also are more likely to work part-time which increases the amount of leisure time that can be spent volunteering

(Einolf 2011). Taniguchi (2006) found that the time women spend volunteering decreases as time spent doing paid work increases. This finding was not true for men, which could be due to the greater proportion of family care work women complete, further decreasing available time for volunteering. Furthermore, life cycle attributes, including marriage and raising children, impact men's and women's volunteer patterns differently (Rotolo 2000).

A number of theories have guided recent research on volunteering. Among the best known and most used approaches to the study of volunteering is a functionalist, psychological approach. Functional analysis is concerned with the reasons and purposes that underlie and generate beliefs and actions; people act when they think an activity will serve important psychological functions for them (Musick and Wilson 2008). Using the functionalist approach, researchers seek to uncover what internal, psychological forces are strong enough to overcome obstacles to volunteering. Over the last twenty years this research approach has led to the development of and replication of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI).

Developed by Clary, Snyder, and Stukas (1996), the VFI has undergone a substantial program of research and is considered a cornerstone of the field. Their research puts forward twenty reasons for volunteering that distill into a six-factor framework. Briefly, the six factors are: values (personal ethics), enhancement, social, career, protective, and understanding. Further testing of the VFI suggests that the motivations to volunteer distinguish people who had volunteered from people who had not volunteered in the last year. In particular, volunteers reported greater levels of motivation in four categories (values, understanding, social, and enhancement), whereas

non-volunteers reported only a greater level of career motivation (Clary, Snyder, and Stukas 1996).

Alternatively, sociologists emphasize that volunteering happens in social situations and individuals use motive talk to make good sense of one's actions (Musick and Wilson 2008). Because motives are socially constructed rather than fixed attributes of individuals, the sociological question is: "Why are these motives acceptable in this context?" Motivation is not randomly distributed across human populations. For example, women generally rank all motivations higher than men, except the career/business motive. By race, minority groups are more strongly motivated to volunteer, but actually volunteer at lower rates, suggesting structural barriers to their participation. Sociologists question if people in different social categories are more or less likely to say that a particular motive was, or would be, important to them as volunteers. Here too, research has shown that motives change over one's life because "aging means changing social agendas" (Musick and Wilson 2008: 74). In sum, "if we rely too heavily on motives to explain volunteer behavior, we overlook the fact that volunteering is broadly patterned, following socio-economic, gender, racial and other contours in the human population" (Wilson and Musik 2008: 80).

Accordingly, individuals' personal backgrounds matter in that people are often socialized into voluntary behaviors (Gazley and Dignam 2008). The reflexive modernization perspective is a sociological view that acknowledges the social constructs that influence volunteerism and is of particular relevance in this study. A reflexive modernization view of volunteering suggests that such behavior is both a collective behavior and an individual action motivated by personal biography. The theory

acknowledges the ever-changing contexts in which volunteering occurs and, therefore, the relationship between the individual volunteer and the organizations (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). The theory suggests that understanding the contexts in which women's associational volunteering happens is an important part of understanding how women make meaning of their experiences.

Women's Experiences in Voluntary Associations

As previously noted, few studies have examined service associations in general or members' experiences in particular. One recent study of Lions Clubs revealed that women and men in Lions Clubs volunteer at a much higher rate than the general population: 97 percent of members volunteered in the previous year compared with 26 percent of the general population. These members volunteered an average of 192 hours per year, significantly more than the 33.9 hours volunteered by the general population. The study found no significant differences in men's and women's volunteer behaviors as members ("Serving, Giving, and Leading in the United States" 2012). The findings of this particular study, however, cannot be extrapolated to other service associations.

Women volunteer more than men and members of service associations – both women and men – volunteer more than the general population. How do women volunteers make meaning of their involvement? A small number of studies reveal that contextual and life-cycle factors influence how women experience and make meaning from their volunteer work. For example, in a study of women volunteers in rural America, Petzela and Mannon (2006) identified three major meanings of volunteerism described by women: an expression of maternal nature, a vehicle for socializing, and a way to promote local economic development. Similarly, Abrahams' (1996) examination

of community volunteers in central California found that while all the women attributed their volunteerism to “giving back” to the community, the meanings ascribed to their work “varied in relation to women’s social location and life stage” (p. 772). For Anglo women, community involvement closely supported their notions of traditional motherhood. Community and identity intersected with racial empowerment for Latino women. And, for older women, community involvement was a way to find meaningful work and maintain an active life after retirement (Abrahams 1996).

Women in one all-female community service organization, the International Association of Women (a pseudonym for an organization very similar to the Junior League in its history, mission, and structure), were motivated to take on leadership by their desire to learn and exercise leadership skills. That is, women who become leaders did so because they were interested in self-development and enjoyed leadership and administrative processes. These women were motivated less by status and prestige and more likely to take on internal volunteer commitments (devoting their time to internal organizational activities) than they were to take on external volunteer activities in the larger community (Markham, Walters, and Bonjean 2001).

In the same study of the International Association of Women, the researchers compared members who worked in the paid labor force and those who did not and found changes in behavior between 1975 and 1992 that mirror women’s larger participation in the workforce. In the first phase of the study conducted in 1975 a small number of members were employed, but by 1992 over half of the members were employed at least part-time. While anecdotal stories within the organization suggested a palpable tension between these two groups of members, Markhan and Bonjean (1999) found no difference

in their satisfaction with organizational participation. The authors suggest that the lack of attitudinal differences between working and non-working members may be because the women's life experiences were relatively similar and even those members who may not have been currently employed had been previously or would be in the future.

Previous studies of female volunteers (Ostrander 1984; Daniels 1988; Odendahl 1990) found that women generally did not challenge traditional gender roles which restricted women, especially women married to wealthy businessmen, to the domestic domain. Rather, their volunteer or philanthropic work reinforced their ideas about gender roles in which men earned money and women participated in "lady bountiful" civic projects. In a case study of women in a Lions Club, women sought to be involved in the community, but did not identify as female "pioneers" within the club, even when they were among the first women to join (Nathan 2009). Similarly, both women volunteers in the breast cancer movement and wealthy female philanthropists who support women's causes often resist identifying as feminists or activists, although their work has been categorized as such by scholars (Blackstone 2004; Odendahl 1990).

The studies reviewed here regarding women in associations stress that understanding and identifying contextual factors such as age, geography, and organizational mission are crucial in such research. Indeed, according to Abrahams (1996), "making sense of women's lives is a messy business inasmuch as social life is dynamically produced.... Women's community participation provides one venue for exploring this process in the simultaneous (re)creation of communities and identities" (p. 790). Employing the reflexive modernization theory to understand the dynamic social

world of female volunteers acknowledges the often dual nature of individuals' motivations and experiences.

Finally, while there is no consensus on the approaches to the study of associational life, the research presented in the following chapters may become an important component in realizing a gendered theory of the nonprofit sector. Given women's greater presence in the nonprofit sector as volunteers and employees, their participation in associations may also be associated with women's rising empowerment; therefore, women's increased representation in public life may strengthen the nonprofit sector (Themundo 2009).

CHAPTER THREE METHODS

Through examination of individuals' life experience, this study uncovered and illuminated the social world of women's participation in voluntary associations. Therefore, a qualitative methodology was appropriately employed. Qualitative inquiry is used in social research to best uncover and understand "what people value and the meanings they attach to experiences, from their own personal and cultural perspectives" (Patton 2002:147). A qualitative approach acknowledges the value-laden nature of the research, makes biases explicit, and respects the meanings that participants express about the issue under examination (Creswell 2007). In keeping with the standards of qualitative research, this chapter describes the procedures and philosophical underpinnings of the study.

Methods of qualitative research include ethnography, case study, participant observation, and life histories, among others. What is shared among these approaches and methods is an emphasis on understanding participants' viewpoints and experiences in their natural settings. Humans have told stories as long as we could talk. It is through stories that we make sense of the human experience. Stories, then, are not just for casually reminiscing among friends or a leisurely pastime, they can become an important source of social data, as explained by Miller and Glassner (2011:148):

All we sociologists have are stories. Some come from other people, some from us, some from our interactions with others. What matters is to understand how and where the stories are produced, which sort of stories they are, and how we can put them to honest and intelligent use in theorizing about social life.

In a search to uncover and record stories, a qualitative researcher must meet individual participants wherever they are, ask questions sensitively, and listen with care. Only then

can we make sense of these stories as data to tell a much larger story about a social phenomenon.

Researcher Paradigm

The approach to this study is phenomenology, a qualitative research method with the objective to examine and describe a phenomenon – an observable occurrence – as it is consciously experienced (Flood 2010). Phenomenology is both a philosophical tradition and a methodological approach for qualitative research (Kvale 1996). What phenomenological approaches “share in common is a focus on exploring how human beings make sense of experiences and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning” (Patton 2002:104). Its focus is on revealing meanings rather than testing or developing theories.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, as articulated by Van Manen (1990), was the guide for this research because it “aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of meaning of our everyday experience” (p. 9). In particular, hermeneutic phenomenology as a descriptive and interpretive method “searches for meaning and significance of certain phenomena” (Van Manen 1990:23), making it the most appropriate tactic for uncovering the values and meanings of voluntary association for women.

As a researcher, “bracketing” my experiences as a member of a service club was an important part of the phenomenological research process. To bracket does not mean that I erased or somehow forgot my experiences, nor that I sought to be totally free of suppositions regarding the topic; rather, it required that I kept these experiences in constant critical analysis (Kvale 1996). Likewise, Van Manen (1990) advises the researcher to make explicit “understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions,

presuppositions, and theories,” in an attempt to “come to terms with our assumptions” (p. 47). I used two bracketing tactics. First, starting with my personal experience, I undertook phenomenological writing without trying to offer causal explanations or interpretive generalizations of my experiences (Van Manen 1990). Revisiting my reflective writing kept me constantly aware and critical of my biases. Also, through a research journal I continuously reflected on the research process, bracketing my experience, so that I was as true to the participants’ experiences and meanings as possible (Hycner 1986). The research journal also promoted the quality and trustworthiness of the research as described below.

Research Design

This study followed an “emergent qualitative design” that allowed flexibility for the unexpected (Creswell 2007). Accordingly, the original research plan did shift to accommodate both limitations and opportunities as they arose. The research was guided by the following question: What are the essential features of the experience of women who are members of community service associations? Relevant sub-questions were: What distinct meanings, if any, do women in service associations give to their volunteer experience? What values do they give to their voluntary participation? What do these meanings tell us about how these women view their role in predominately male domains? What are the differences and similarities between traditionally-male versus all-female service clubs? Informed by phenomenology, but with comparative case study elements, these questions are specifically addressed in chapter six.

Data Collection

The primary method for data collection in this study was individual interviews. Interviews are commonly used in qualitative and phenomenological research because they allow participants to tell their stories in their own words, rather than through prescribed questionnaires or surveys. Miller and Glassner (2011) explain that qualitative interviewing provides a way to examine the nature of the phenomenon under investigation, including contexts and situations in which it emerges, while offering insights into ways people make sense of their experiences.

Furthermore, interviews are the appropriate approach for phenomenology because they reveal “descriptions of experiences, not explanations or analyses” (Moustakas 1994:58). Using the participants’ own words captures the experience “as close as possible, the original texture of” the phenomenon (Moustakas 1994:58). In the findings, thick descriptions bring the phenomenon alive, “illuminate its presence, accentuate its underlying meanings, enable the phenomenon to linger, retain its spirit, as near to its actual nature as possible” (Moustakas 1994:59). For this study, twenty-six in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted in a location of the participants’ choice and ranged from twenty to seventy-five minutes. Each semi-structured interview consisted of open-ended questions related to the subjects’ experiences as members and volunteers, of inclusion or exclusion, conceptions and meanings of community service, and personal philanthropic beliefs (see Appendix A for interview guide). Interviews were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed. In the findings, names and some personal descriptions have been changed to protect the women’s identity. Quotes may be slightly edited for clarity and readability, but retain the participant’s intent and meaning.

While the uniqueness of each participant's experiences is acknowledged and respected, the sample was divided into two sets to allow for comparative case analysis. Case studies generally use a mix of evidence to understand and describe the case(s) resulting in "richly detailed, thick, and holistic elaborations and understandings of instances or variants of bounded social phenomena" (Snow and Trom 2002:151). In order to flesh out the stories told through the phenomenological interview analysis, archival records and historical newspaper stories, where available, were incorporated into the findings. Such documents provide information to round out the description of each case as detailed below. In other words, combining case study tactics with a phenomenological approach tells a more complete story.

Sample and Study Participants

A purposive sample of women who have experienced the phenomena is the appropriate sample design for this study (Patton 2002). Women in Rotary clubs were chosen to represent traditionally-male clubs since Rotary International was the source of the Supreme Court decision; women in Junior League were included because it was the first among nationally-organized women's service associations. Participants were recruited through existing connections with Rotary Clubs and Junior Leagues which often led to snowball sampling as several participants were eager to connect me with others, frequently doing so without my inquiry (see Appendix B for recruitment letter).

Associations of all kinds define who is a member of their group in various ways. For the purpose of this study, members were defined as those individuals with a current or previous relationship with the association. In particular, three types of members were included. Most of the study's participants were active members, meaning that they paid

annual dues and regularly participated in association activities. Former members were those who were formerly active members, but no longer maintained a relationship with the association. And in the case of Junior League women, a number of sustaining members were included. These women were “retired” from active membership, but maintained a relationship by paying a small yearly fee and participating in events designed specifically for other sustaining members.

Women from Rotary Clubs and Junior Leagues throughout Indiana and Illinois were invited to participate, although participants largely came from two major population centers. The geographic boundary is appropriate because the Midwest region was the heart of the service club movement’s origin and service associations still thrive in the country’s midsection (Charles 1993). In the findings, women from Rotary and Junior League – even if they were members in differing cities or had transferred membership from one city to another – are grouped together respectively in order to fully describe the essence of women’s voluntary experiences as a phenomenon. Because of the long history and international structure of these particular associations, on the national level the differences between them are small. While not to negate real or perceived differences between associations on the local level, for the purpose of this research the two associations are treated as respective unified groups (Charles 1993).

In most qualitative research a large sample is neither practical nor beneficial. The purpose of the research is not to make predictive generalizations or find statistical significance but rather to communicate the unique, the specific, or the particular (Creswell 2007). For phenomenology in particular, sample sizes range from one to thirty. More important than the total number of participants is that the interviews have reached a

point of saturation, that is, the point in which new information is no longer revealed (Glaser and Strauss 1967). In total, twenty-six unique individuals are included in this study as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Study Participants

	Number	Member Type	Definition
Junior League	10	Active	Pays dues, participates in regular activities, fulfills annual service requirements.
	5	Long-time sustainers	Formerly active, pay nominal dues, involved less formally with no service requirements. Have been “retired” for more than 10 years.
	3	Recent sustainers	Formerly active, pay nominal dues, involved less formally with no service requirements. Have “retired” within the last 5 years.
	1	Former	Formerly active but has resigned membership, ending all ties to association.
	3 mother-daughter pairs		
Rotary	9	Active	Pays dues, participates in regular activities.
TOTAL	26	2 women are counted both as active Rotary members and Junior League long-time sustainers	

Participants ranged in age from twenty-five to seventy-four and had been members for as few as six months to more than fifteen years. All had a least a college education and were either currently employed or retired from a professional career. The women were all white which may be because there are fewer women of color who belong to these groups, but also may be due to the snowball sampling method in which participants referred other women who were like themselves. A complete list of participants with descriptive information is included in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with transcription of each interview. Taking the time to transcribe the conversations myself forced an intellectual and physical closeness to the data for the analysis process. Subsequently, each interview was coded line-by-line and by hand. In keeping with the tradition of phenomenology, I approached each sentence of the transcript by determining: “What does this line reveal about the phenomenon?” (Van Manen 1990). The process of coding by long hand, without the assistance of a computer program, provided the greatest connection to the data. Hard copies of the coded transcripts were consulted throughout the analysis and writing process.

After line-by-line coding, I returned to the data to look for common themes. A theme is a way to capture and make sense of the phenomenon in a symbolic form (Van Manen 1990). Next, written memos on each theme integrated the words and experiences of the women. After several memos were assembled, they were organized into a logical flow that became the basis of the essential features of membership described in the following chapters.

A second stage of analysis drew on case study methodology by treating each association as individual cases. Employing cross-case analysis between Rotary and Junior League provided additional layers of depth and context (Creswell 2007). Cross-case analysis looks for thematic and interpretive differences across the cases. As stated above, primary and secondary documents filled in details for each case. The results of comparative analysis are presented in chapter six.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Unlike statistically-based quantitative research, there is no one paradigm or measure by which to judge the quality of qualitative research (Rolfe 2006). Issues of internal and external validity, for example, are less relevant in most qualitative research than in quantitative studies. Any kind of artificial measure of validity or reliability in this research may jeopardize the meaningfulness of the findings (Rolfe 2006). Instead, a number of elements in the research design promote trustworthiness as described in the following section.

The inclusion of primary and secondary documents helps justify the ultimate findings. In other words, these materials clarify and expand on information gathered through the interviews. Sources in the public record also help to verify participants' accounts while providing additional context to interpret any conflicting accounts (White 2007). One of the strengths in examining the two associations as distinct cases as described above is that the greater variation contributes to a more compelling interpretation and ensures more precise findings (Merriam 2009).

Furthermore, the research journal provides a "super audit trail" (Rolfe 2006: 309) by which to judge the quality of the final report. The research journal is an analytical tool for reflection throughout the data collection and analysis processes. Indeed, strong qualitative research is often guided by a researcher's writing and rewriting in all stages of research. It is also a place where my own experience as a member of a service club is bracketed and reflects my influence on the data. Portions of the phenomenological bracketing process first captured in the research journal are part of the reflexive statement found in Appendix D.

Limitations

Qualitative data are complex and detailed with multiple findings, interrelationships and subgroups. The ultimate findings must effectively communicate broad concepts while attending to exceptions. There are two major limitations to the sample captured in this study that draw attention to these challenges. First, with one exception, the sample does not include women who may have been members for only a short time but are no longer associated. In Junior League, for example, the most common time for members to leave is after two or three years of membership. The sample of Rotary members only includes women who have, for the most part, been members for ten or more years. No former members or newer members (less than ten years) are included in the Rotary sample due to the snowball sample method and partially a result of the association's overall demographics. While former-members would be important voices to include, they are traceable only through identifying information in clubs' archival records. Such a deep dive was not feasible for this research project. What is missing without these voices is a description of negative experiences that cause members to leave.

Secondly, snowball sampling leads to an issue of homogeneity. Except for three women who referred me to interview their mothers, participants tended to recommend other women who were similar to themselves in age or who was an active leader during the same time period. As mentioned in the sample description above, all the participants were similar in socio-economic status: white, college educated, middle to upper class. The sample likely reflects the overall composition of the associations although it does eliminate potentially interesting outliers. The problem of homogeneity can be that it "may simply override differences in attitudes that might result from employment status in a

broader sample of the female members of all voluntary associations” (Markham and Bonjean 1999: 714). This limitation is partially overcome with the inclusion of non-interview sources of information. While the homogeneous nature of the sample limits generalizations, phenomenology’s aim is not to make generalizations but rather to describe and interpret the essence of a phenomenon.

Findings are described in the next two chapters. A complex description of membership in Junior League and Rotary is presented respectively in chapters four and five. Each chapter provides a short history of the association, examines both the individual experiences of members and organizational characteristics. Chapter six concludes with comparative analysis of the two cases and discusses its implications.

CHAPTER FOUR

JUNIOR LEAGUE FINDINGS

In 1994, a *New York Times* article noted that the Junior League's "elitist image seems to be as much a part of a bygone era as straw boaters, finishing schools and a time when 'coming out' had to do with a young woman making her debut in society" (Marks 1994). Indeed, since it began in 1901, the Junior League has undergone significant changes as it has adapted to women's changing lifestyles. This chapter examines these changes and provides an account of women's experiences in Junior League today. A brief history of the association sets the stage for the rest of the chapter. Next, a complex description of Junior League membership as a phenomenon is presented in three parts: joining, volunteering, and leading as the essence of members' experience. The chapter concludes with the examination of three paradoxes of membership uncovered in the data analysis. In the phenomenological tradition, this chapter and the next "transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" that respects the uniqueness of each participant (Van Manen 1990:36).

Junior League History

The Junior League was launched in New York City in 1901 as the Junior League for the Promotion of Settlement Movements. According to a history of the League written by Gordon and Reische (1982), its founder, Mary Harriman, a recent college graduate from an affluent family, gathered a group of debutantes – young women from wealthy families who had come of age – to bring awareness to the settlement house movement and channel the young women's social conscience into meaningful work. The organization was a success socially and in terms of its service. Its first charitable activity raised \$1,500 for the College Settlement house. Activities quickly included training

courses and lectures on social problems provided by faculty of the New York School of Philanthropy (now Columbia University School of Social Work). By 1911, the New York Junior League had 500 members. As the association grew, membership protocols became more formalized and by 1914 an admissions committee was established which required new members to secure five letters of recommendation from current members.

The Junior League model created by Mary Harriman and her contemporaries quickly gained a following across the country. By 1911 Leagues existed in Boston, Brooklyn, and Portland, Oregon. Other Leagues continued to sprout up, but without any kind of formal structure or standards uniting the various Leagues. In 1914, a national board of all Junior League presidents was established to begin the work of creating national guidelines and, by 1918, it instituted a procedure by which new groups could call themselves a Junior League. On the national level, the Junior League came of age in the 1920s with 82 separate Leagues and 17,000 members (Gordon and Reische 1982).

For much of its history, League membership has largely come from upper-class women and those who did not work for pay outside the home. A national survey in 1935 confirmed that its members were “domestic in taste,” adhering to traditional feminine roles: 72% of members were married and 78% of those married members had children (“Wives in Majority in Junior League” 1935). Although existing historic documents do not completely confirm, “membership seems to have been almost exclusively white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in this period” (Gordon and Reisch 1982: 72). It is possible that the rank-and-file membership of some Leagues may have been more diverse, especially in smaller cities, but the reputation of Junior League as an elite social organization

persisted; today's Junior League continues to grapple with the misperceptions related to that reputation.

The oldest members interviewed in this study provide a first-hand glimpse in the organizational culture of the League during the time when the vast majority of members did not work outside the home. Both Eva and Veronica fondly remember the time that Junior League activities were the centerpiece of their lives outside of familial duties. Eva explained that League activities happened during the day time and the evenings were reserved for family:

We were not allowed to call each other about Junior League business after 6 at night. It was lovely. We worked hard all day and then husbands came home or children came home from school and that was their time. I cannot remember anybody breaking that rule. I understand now why it isn't practical anymore. But there was something nice about knowing that was compartmentalized and the focus could be elsewhere.

The experience of members like Eva and Veronica in this study was common among their generation, but as will be shown later in this chapter, today it is much more likely that members conduct League business well into the evening hours.

Committed to its mission of training volunteers, Junior Leagues across the country responded to various community needs and took on service projects that ranged from traditional social welfare work to arts and cultural activities, historic preservation and children's educational programs. By the 1970s and 1980s, "the emphasis changed from Lady Bountiful projects, benefit balls and bazaars to social activism" (Robertson 1983). Junior League members became local and national lobbyists on issues such as criminal justice, adoption rules, child abuse, domestic violence, and environmental protection, to name a few (Gordon and Reische 1982).

Throughout the decades, the association and its individual Leagues often struggled to find a balance between the needs of its older members and the rapidly changing lives of younger members (and potential members). In response to the Civil Rights Movement, for example, many leagues began to slowly recruit members beyond the traditional WASP community. In 1978 the governing board approved a non-discrimination policy and by the 1980s most Leagues had abandoned secret admission practices (Gordon and Reische 1982). But the diversity issue remains a touchy subject for some League officials who insist that its predominately white racial composition does not entirely reflect its community or work with underserved populations (Hershenson 1993). According to reports from 1999, Junior League membership remained 96 percent white (Bumiller 1999).

Also since the 1980s, Junior League was forced to adapt to women's movement into paid work. Leagues struggled to make their activities and service requirements available to both full-time working women and those who did not work outside the home (Gordon and Reische 1982). Many Leagues, for example, gradually shifted day-time meetings to evenings, while others adjusted service requirements, training course offerings, and offered more one-time or weekend volunteer opportunities (Lewin 1985). Despite these changes, its commitment to volunteerism has not waned, as noted by Marks (1994):

The emphasis on training highly motivated women and sending them into the community was as strong when the founding members of the Junior League went into the settlement houses in New York's slums at the turn of the century as it is today. Since its inception, the league's members have been involved in intrepid, even dangerous work.

Despite organizational changes of the 1980s and 1990s, the Junior League continued to fight its reputation as “volunteerism mixed with white gloves and tea” (Neal 1993: B1). The *New York Times* noted that “there is perhaps no volunteer group in America as misunderstood as the Junior League” (Marks 1994). It was newsworthy in Indianapolis, for example, that the local League selected its first full-time, working mother as president in 1993. Indeed, by the early 1990s, a majority of Indianapolis members, 65%, worked outside the home (Neal 1993). Increasingly so, Junior League members across the United States “are not Ladies Who Lunch. They don’t have the time” (Marks 1994).

Sweeping social and cultural changes over the 112-year history of the Junior League reveal an organization, like many other voluntary associations, that has at times succeeded and other times struggled to respond meaningfully to social changes while staying true to its original mission. Today, the Association of Junior Leagues International boasts 155,000 members who belong to 292 Leagues in four countries (Association of Junior Leagues International 2012). In 2001, the Executive Director of the Association of Junior Leagues International, Jane Silverman, noted that the story of the Junior League is one of tradition and change (Jackson 2001). How its members find meaning in the association’s commitment to tradition while making sense of an ever-changing social milieu is explored in the subsequent findings.

Joining the Junior League

As explained in the previous chapter, hermeneutic phenomenology is both descriptive and interpretive. This research identified three essential aspects of women’s experience in Junior League are described in this and the following two sections: joining,

volunteering, and leading. The chapter concludes with three interpretive paradoxes of women's membership.

Women in this study were asked how they first became members of the Junior League. Responses reflect the broader changes experienced by the association and its members. Only the oldest woman interviewed joined during the "invitation" or "secret" age; more often, a woman joined along with her peer group. The most recent members sought membership as a way to forge their personal and professional identity.

Before the late 1970s, most Leagues across the country maintained a secret membership application process that often required a potential member to secure a number of recommendation letters from current members. As described earlier, secretive practices were abandoned as the League faced external pressure to diversify. The oldest sustaining member interviewed, Veronica, joined in 1965 as a twenty-two year old college graduate. Veronica vividly remembered the secretive process:

I can remember filling out my own application in the basement of the college sorority with a blanket over my head because it was all secret. My mother's dearest friend wanted to sponsor me so my mother sent me the application and I filled out my own application in the basement of the sorority house with a blanket over my head so that nobody would see what I was really doing.

The Junior League maintained a certain sense of status in the community through its selective membership process.

When another long-time sustaining member, Eva, joined in 1971, the membership process was already beginning to change and lessen its secretive status. Both Eva and Beth described joining alongside friends and peers who were also involved. As young mothers, not working outside the home at the time they joined, Junior League membership fulfilled a desire to be trained in the community. Beth noted:

Junior League gives you a great opportunity to work with women and gain skills and to learn about volunteerism. And to get involved in projects that benefit the community, sometimes on a statewide level. The training involved running committees and doing projects and getting people to work with you. It very much is like the more current term of teamwork, or using a team to work on a project. We were doing those kinds of things quite some time ago. Over the course of the membership I gained knowledge on how to do things in an organized, efficient way. And of course I had offices and got an opportunity to practice these skills.

The organizational training was especially important for Beth because it helped prepare her to later become a corporate accounting executive and serve on a number of high-level nonprofit and state-side boards.

The training described by Beth was typical of the informal kinds of training learned as women participated in various committee assignments and volunteer projects. It was not necessarily training learned through formal educational programs. However, the skills these members learned were often parlayed into other community volunteer work or professional work, which is in keeping with the Junior League's original mission of training women for community involvement. In line with Junior League's tradition, these women became sustaining members, retired from active membership but with continuing ties to the association, at age 40. Eva noted laughingly, "it was the only reason you ever celebrated you were 40."

Pamela and Olivia characterize a slightly younger cohort of long-time sustaining members, now in their late-50s, who joined in the mid to late-1980s. By the mid-1980s, the invitation process had been entirely eliminated and membership recruits largely came through peer-to-peer networks. Olivia joined while employed full time and mentioned that her decision to join was not entirely calculated, rather it was what her peer group was doing at the time:

You just know people who did it. It was something that you did. I'm not sure I thought it through all that carefully. I knew obviously people that were doing it and it was... I think I must've been 30, 29 or 30, it's just what you did. And I was working. So I don't know if I thought it through so much.

Pamela, on the other hand, carefully calculated her membership. She did not join while employed outside the home. Rather, Junior League became an outlet for engagement once she stayed home with her young children. Pamela described her thought process:

People at different times had approached me, and I was just too busy, because I know that there was a significant volunteer component and I just said, "You know I have little kids. I'm working full-time." There was a friend who had older kids than I did, she said once your kids are in school then you can do this. So yeah, I think that's what I did. A friend just said, come and do it. It was something I had literally postponed. I knew they were a good group of women, and the people I knew who were in the group were fun, dynamic people who didn't sit around eating bonbons. They were very articulate, fun people. They got stuff done. They had a good PR engine. The Junior League doesn't just write checks; they send a huge volunteer commitment.

Pamela later went on to explain that her participation in Junior League was "a part of me, a part of being a mother at home, as a young mother at home, it was a great way to make myself get back in the community." For the cohort of women who were active while stay-at-home mothers, the Junior League was a way to cultivate their sense of community and personal identity as active mothers.

It is worth noting that all of the women described so far were civic-minded, but would not have been eligible or invited to join other civic groups dedicated to community service. Civic associations like Rotary Clubs only began inviting women in the late 1980s and early 1990s; when they did so, only women at the top of their profession were invited in an attempt to keep the membership standards as high as possible. Excluded from the

traditionally-male domain of service clubs, Junior League continued to be the primary civic association for a certain class of educated women.

Among recent sustainers, the motivations for membership become more complex. Only one participant described a situation in which the opportunity to join presented itself in an unlikely way. Rather, for most women in their late 30s and 40s, joining the League was a way to develop tangible skills and their personal identity. For Christina and Tara, their mothers' membership and pushing prompted their membership. Tara, for example, noted that her mother was directly responsible for ensuring she joined by the annual membership deadline. Twenty-two years old and right out of college, Tara was grateful for her mother's "way of helping me find the path of meeting other like-minded women." Similarly, for Christina, who joined at age twenty-six, it was her mother's membership that made her aware of the opportunity to be trained through Junior League. Christina articulated a specific motivation for training that would take her community service to a higher level:

I did join because I felt like the League, and I still believe this, is the best place to be trained in terms of doing voluntary service in the community. That's why I joined. My mom was a member of the League so that's obviously some motivation there. But I was interested in doing volunteer work and that's sort of where I was steered. You start there and then you can move on from there and do other things. That's absolutely what the League does is train you and then you go out and do good in the world. I've always volunteered. It's part of my make up. I was already doing volunteer work, so it wasn't like I didn't know how to volunteer. But in terms of going to a more high level organizational type of volunteering, that's the jump I made.

Junior League provided more than just beneficial training; it was the vehicle to express an interest in volunteer work and cultivate a personal identity as someone who cares about the community. And, as all of the sustaining members in the study have done, Christina

continues to be involved as a volunteer in several local groups including her children's school, an annual home tour, and her church's governing board, just to name a few.

The desire for training became stronger among younger members. Active members interviewed were largely recruited through peer-to-peer networking and open recruiting events. The women in this sub-group ranged in age from twenty-five to forty-one and their length of membership spanned six months to over ten years. All were working professionals in careers ranging from lawyers and nonprofit executives to corporate management and university officials. Despite the array, a distinct pattern of these women's motivations for joining emerged. In particular, membership in a volunteer organization was a way for professional women to cultivate both their professional network and their personal identity as someone who cares about the community.

Lilith, an active member in her late 30s, epitomizes the duality of women's motivations for membership today. She was looking to develop a network of like-minded women across the community at the same time as she engaged in volunteer work that would benefit her professionally. She said:

I joined the Junior League because I wanted to have a way to get engaged in the community outside of my professional work, because I work in the nonprofit sector, and to build relationships and make connections to other women in the community. What stands out to me the most is that I was able to combine both of those and meet some really interesting people from different professions, and women that I would not have run into in my normal circles, while being involved in a voluntary organization that is trying to improve the community.

The desire to be engaged in the community, however, cannot be separated from the way in which Lilith's Junior League involvement was coupled with her professional work.

She further explained:

[Junior League] added a breath of understanding that I didn't have. I think I was able to bring some of the underlying and transferable skills in grant review that transcend the funding focus of the organization's mission It's funny because when I started in the League, I really wanted to keep the two areas separate and do something very different. But it was very enriching to have an experience that was very enmeshed in what I was doing professional and I was able to bring my skills from my professional life to volunteer. It was more enriching; I almost felt like I was able to contribute more doing something that I had the transferable skills for.

For many members like Lilith, personal and professional motivations are blended together in a way that informs how they participate in League activities and the benefits derived from membership. The duality of motivations is further described under the heading "Paradox One."

Volunteering

Once women join the Junior League, they generally spend their first year as provisional members, an exploratory period designed to introduce the new member to both the League's committee structures and its major community service projects. Intended to give members opportunities to learn all aspects of League operations, each year active members receive new committee assignments. Much of the training members receive is by annually learning new committee positions. For example, Katie's first year placement was with a community service committee working with a local girls mentoring organization. In her second year, Katie became chair of the committee, in charge of coordinating League volunteers for the mentoring program. As Katie's example illustrates, Junior League volunteering is both external (with outside nonprofit organizations) and internal (relating to League operations).

The story of the medial van serving the local homeless population provides a quintessential example of a Junior League service project. Traditionally, the League's

philosophy has been to commit both a large charitable contribution and volunteer hours over several years to ensure that the project can become self-sustainable by the completion of the League's commitment. In the late 1980s, the League was instrumental in establishing a medical van that continues to service the local homeless community.

Pamela explained the project:

At that point many of the League's service projects were still within most of the members' comfort zones, and then all of a sudden I bring this to the table! Up until that point, the free clinic was based inside the homeless shelters one or two nights a week. But it's estimated that one-third of homeless people will not go into the shelter. So how do we get to those people? I was like, 'if we had a van we could do it.' We could retrofit an RV, put a little exam room in the back. But that required \$40,000 and a lot of volunteers. The League agreed to take it on as project in my first year, and I headed it up. I had to recruit 150 doctors, 200 nurses, and 200 clerks who could also drive the van. Of course, our committee beat everybody in service hours. All of a sudden we were reaching to another part of the community that wouldn't associate with the League – the doctors, nurses, and the retired people who were our clerk/drivers – we had quadrupled the number of volunteers involved in a League project and the number of people we served.

In many ways, the medical van project, which required members to interact directly with the neediest individuals in the community, was similar to the Junior League's first mission of settlement house work and the delivery of social services. Today, many members are engaged in youth mentoring and literacy programs as the focus of their external service through the League.

An annual fundraising event provides a typical example of the internal volunteer work that members are required to complete. All interviewees had at least one committee placement with the annual event that included such responsibilities as vendor recruitment, marketing, coordinating logistics for sub-events, or soliciting corporate sponsors. Many of the women recalled positive experiences as they became more "ingrained in

operations” including other committee work such as researching community needs, grantmaking, and board service. For example, Eva remembered learning how to do a community needs study with the assistance of a local professor. Eventually, the report was locally published. Without irony, Eva noted, “the most pressing problems were public transportation, drugs, and crime. And guess what, those are still our worst problems.”

Six of the interviewees shared memorable times working with direct beneficiaries of League services such as the young girls in the mentoring program or the women and children in a women’s prison program. For these women, direct service was a particularly meaningful way to interact with the community. Tara remembered “feeling like maybe I really am having an impact on someone’s life.” Andrea was especially moved by the League’s program in the women’s prison. Having to deal with her own preconceived notions about incarcerated women, she noted a turning point in her own way of thinking: “it turned from us doing a service project to us really helping other human beings.”

However, because of the emphasis on service within the League’s committee structure, much more of the volunteering described by study participants was internal. In fact, oftentimes members did not have any experiences or memories of providing a direct service, as characterized by Lucy:

I guess in thinking about it I don’t know if I have ever worked with a beneficiary, which is unfortunate. I’ve always been on the programmatic side of things I guess. Not because that’s necessarily what I want to do, but that’s where I’m pulled.

In these cases, women were more likely to chair larger committees in which other members conducted direct service underneath their leadership.

Participants were asked about the meaning of volunteerism and service in their lives. For some of the women, volunteering and service were tied together and constituted two understandings of the same concept. For others, they were very distinct concepts with volunteering understood as an outwardly action and service requiring deeper motives and intentions.

Service and volunteerism were most often described as other-centered actions. Margaret, a seven-year member in her early 30s, said that she volunteers because “I like to know that I am making a change in somebody else's life. For somebody else's family or I'm helping somebody become a better person. And I think that there is no greater value.” The value articulated by Margaret refers to the personal, moral ethic that inspired her desire to volunteer. And for Jessica, in her eleventh year as a member, the meaning of volunteerism was the opportunity to address issues she sees every day. By having an understanding of community needs and resources learned through Junior League, Jessica felt as if she could best contribute to her community in a meaningful way.

In addition to the other-focused view of service, a number of women acknowledged the dual nature of service. Lilith, for example, articulated that service often benefits both the recipient and the giver and requires positive intentions. According to Lilith:

Service is both action and engagement and involvement in the community, but it is also a way for personal growth. It's a way to both improve and engage the community and improve and engage different parts of yourself. It's both an extroverted and introverted type of action. I think of service as an action. It is in engagement. You are using something, whether or not it's your hands, physical activity and engagement, or through your intellect using your skills and knowledge to benefit something.

Similarly, Lucy noted that volunteerism is not always motivated by others' needs, but can be motivated by one's own need. In particular, Lucy typifies what many young women in this study expressed as their motives for initially joining the Junior League: to meet new friends and improve their career network at the same time as they can provide a community benefit.

And finally, service and volunteerism were addressed as a civic duty. Elizabeth's comments were typical of this sentiment:

I think we're academically blessed, financially we're in a situation where we have the luxury to do these things and I think it's important that people give back to the community. There's a lot of things that government doesn't provide and churches can't provide and institutions can't provide; and it takes like-minded people moving together, growing together, to accomplish certain things.

Similarly, Katie, the second-year member involved in the girls mentoring program, expressed service in terms of reciprocity based in an attitude of mutuality. She explained that,

I think it's an attitude, knowing that you certainly aren't better than anyone but also that you owe it to people, you owe it to your community to give what you have. If you're healthy, that might mean going out doing your time, if you've done well with money then I think you giving your service through some of your assets, that kind of thing. So right now I'm 25, I don't have much money, but I have a lot of time and I'm healthy and I know a lot of people. I think it's my duty to provide that kind of service.

Likewise, she believed that volunteerism is an important duty of all members of a community. For Katie, who came from a small town in which volunteerism was a high school requirement, Junior League was a natural extension of the helping behaviors she learned growing up and practiced as a member of a college sorority.

Whether it is an obligation of community life, a learned behavior passed on through families, or an expression of mutuality, service and volunteerism for these women is one important part of their lives. Regarding the desire to volunteer, Pamela declared, “I would have no life without it. It's just like breathing.” Junior League nurtures the voluntary spirit while creating a space for women to find and explore their individual response to community needs. As Natalie expressed, “Volunteering for me is a way to find fulfillment that I don’t get professionally. I find more fulfillment personally, for personal growth and personal satisfaction, from volunteering.” One’s service may depend on her life circumstances, or may provide the volunteer some kind of self-benefit, but in each case represented here, service reflects a contribution to benefit others’ welfare.

Leading and Leadership

Given the extensive committee work members perform and training programs offered, it is not surprising that leadership is another key aspect of women’s membership. Leadership varied from a relatively simple role as committee secretary, to mentoring new members, to service on the governing board. Eva explained that it was common to first serve as the committee secretary and to take on the chair’s role the following year. Leadership required certain tact and skills to bring a group of women with varying levels of knowledge and experience to consensus. Lilith explained her work as chair of the grants committee:

I was more of the shepherd of the conversation, trying to help shepherd it into a positive, try to keep it going in a positive direction, but I didn’t try to dominate the discussion in any way. I think that led to more of a consensus and more of the committee having the feeling that they had real ownership in the decision.

Andrea was among a small minority of interviewees who noted that the leadership experience was the most important part of her membership:

Generally the thing that most stands out for me is the leadership role within the League. By far, it is one of those organizations in which you get as much out of it as you put in it. When I first started out I was not very sure of myself, I was right out of college and looking for something to do in the community. If I hadn't taken on that leadership role, it would have been a totally different experience.

Andrea's experience is unique because she was also among the interviewees who voiced the strongest commitment to community service and focused a great deal of her interview remarks on her experience with the women's prison program. While she served for a year on the nominating committee, it was her work leading the committee to administer the volunteer program in the women's prison that defined Andrea's membership.

Due to rigid committee structures, Olivia remembered that leadership was:

Very serious, very structured. You had definite committee structures. I was vice president at one point. It was all very serious business. I did a lot of work on the executive level in the communications arena. I remember it being very businesslike, very efficient.

The strict structure is both a positive and negative feature of organizational operations. The structure maintains continuity from year to year as individual members rotate committee assignments. However, the structures add layers of bureaucracy that sometimes inhibit flexible, creative, and last-minute responses to issues. Andrea was the only participant to acknowledge the downside of the League's administrative structures:

While I loved my leadership role and I embraced my leadership role, I did struggle a lot with the governance structure of the League. I struggle with the fact that I had to sit through multiple levels of meetings to get decisions made that I really felt were not worthy of going through levels of discussion.

A similar notion was previously found in a survey of members. When asked about what they like least, members cited too much bureaucracy that inhibited efficiency and effectiveness and long meetings for the sake of long meetings (Markham, Walters, and Bonjean 2001).

Despite these challenges, the committee structures allow all members to take on new assignments, learn new skills, gain expertise related to community issues, and discover personal strengths. As an essential part of the League experience, there is no shortage of members willing to set up and take on the highest levels of leadership. Katie expressed her own aspirations: “I would like to be on the board in a few years, and be president one day, hopefully in the next 10 years.”

Paradox One – Blending Professional and Personal Motivations

Joining, volunteering, and leading characterize the essence of the Junior League experience. Beyond their surface experiences, the data reveals three paradoxes of women’s experiences that are described in the following sections. These paradoxes were not explicitly expressed by those interviewed; rather, the paradoxes derive from the interpretive analysis.

The blending of professional and personal motivations sets up the first paradox of membership in today’s Junior League. A majority of active members interviewed conveyed an explicit motivation for joining that combined the desire to improve their personal and professional networks. Meeting other women who are “like-minded,” who “love to volunteer,” and “love organizational work” was a common response. Some women, before they decided to join, tagged along with another friend to learn more and “meet some people” because it sounded fun. And, indeed, the women they met through

the Junior League became close personal friends while new professional contacts sometimes led to new job opportunities.

On the personal level, many of the women sought Junior League as an avenue to cultivate new friendships. For young women like Lucy, Junior League replaced the social networks she had in her college sorority and extracurricular activities. She noted, “I met some nice new friends and I made some contacts which was my main goal.” Even among the oldest participants, friendships were an important part of the experience that extended beyond active membership, as described by Veronica, “Some of my best friends are members of the Junior League that I met all those years ago.”

Professionally, Junior League served as a place to make contacts and gain training that directly improved one’s career. Margaret, for example, an active member looking to make a career change once completing a graduate degree, clearly indicated that she benefited more from her membership than she contributed through direct volunteer work with beneficiaries: “I made friends and I’ve made contacts. It’s been best for networking, especially in the nonprofit world. So now, seven years in, I’m finally starting to reap the benefits.”

Likewise, Tara, the recent sustainer highlighted above, used her involvement as a way to prepare for a career change. She noted:

It was a good experience. I knew that in some way I wanted to be involved in nonprofits, so I used that experience to have training so that when I transitioned to grad school I would have more insight into the nonprofit world, and even more experience from the volunteer perspective. So I approached membership with a career perspective in mind.

Michelle directly benefited from the professional network she developed in that it led to her current executive-level job in a nonprofit organization. Megan found that Junior

League helped her develop confidence to take on new projects and leadership roles that led to her securing a major professional promotion:

Right now I'm in my first management position and I don't even know if I would have went for it without all this experience leading committees. I told them when I started the role that my volunteer job trained me to learn things quickly.

It becomes difficult to separate participation in the League from current members' professional life. Because most members today work full-time, their League activities – from serving on committees to spending time at League organized volunteer events – become an extension of their professional lives. The boundaries between their professional and volunteer work are so blurry that women described the two as so “intertwined” that “sometimes I forget what's what to be honest.”

Unlike the first few generations of League members who joined the League to gain volunteer experience, almost all of today's members have grown up volunteering either as learned within their family, required through school, or part of her college experience. These members in their 20s and early 30s expect community service to be part of their lives and, therefore, sought out the League, through peers who were already members or family members including mothers, sisters, and cousins. Volunteering further becomes part of their personal identity and engrained in their professional life, to the point that it is impossible to separate the two.

Paradox Two – Personal vs. Community Benefit

Because the League contributes to women's personal and professional identities, a tension arises between the members' desire to provide community service and the individual benefits they receive. While a few women were clearly and profoundly moved by the direct service they completed through League projects – working with a mobile

health care van to reach the homeless, interacting with women and children in the women's prison, or mentoring young girls in the public school system – most interview participants could not or did not have memories or experiences interacting with direct beneficiaries. Instead, most of the volunteer training they undertake is internal to the organization's committee and governance structures, in essence, its self-perpetrating bureaucracy. Accordingly, women described the value of their membership in terms of what they gained as individuals, not in terms of community improvement. In other words, they found the personal benefits of membership worth the time invested and dues paid.

As previously described, the emphasis on internal volunteer work is partially by design, in line with Junior League's mission to train women for volunteer work elsewhere in the community or to serve on other community boards. The success at training civic and professional leaders is often held up among its greatest accomplishments, as it was by Gordon and Reische (1982): "The Junior League has become a vast training mechanism, producing volunteers trained in skills essential to the survival of the voluntary sector – management, grantsmanship, advocacy, group dynamics" (p.17). However, below the surface, the emphasis on individual leadership leads to further tensions between the association's mission and emphasis on measuring community impact. If the skills learned and training offered do more to further members' careers, then the ultimate beneficiaries of the Junior League may be questionable. Who most benefits from membership: the member or the community?

Christina's experience best highlights the tension between individual gain and community improvement. Although she clearly indicated that the League did not influence or benefit her career, she was clear in noting that the relationships she

developed and skills that she learned were the most beneficial thing about her membership. Christina clearly distanced herself from the benefits of networking, yet, the significance of personal friendships was a result of informal networking among members. Christina, a sustaining member in her late 40s, acknowledges that the League's newer emphasis on career networking could be problematic for the association:

[Today's] volunteers have a different agenda, I'm not saying it's wrong, personally I don't think the League is about networking, it's about learning community service, meeting new people, making new friends, and launching yourself. That comes back to the whole 'junior' thing, it is what it's supposed to start off as, and then you go out to do other things. I do feel like the motivation is more about networking for business purposes and that does bother me.

Almost all members interviewed expressed the friendships and connections made as the most important aspect or most valuable part of their membership. When asked, "thinking back over your membership, what most stands out for you?" the friendships, connections, and training were most often mentioned, not the measurable or immeasurable impact the League's projects or grantmaking have had on the betterment of the community. Clearly, the personal significance of these friendships was often expressed as the most valuable thing about membership as characterized by these comments:

- "I didn't join for the friendships, but that is the most valuable thing that you gain – that intense friendship, commonality, the shared experiences, and knowledge." (Christina)
- "It's really been important to friendships and support in different times during your life, I think a lot of people will tell you that." (Jessica)
- "The friendships. It may not be a situation where you see your Junior League friends on a daily basis or anything like that. But you know you can pick up the phone and you're taken seriously, that we're going to do whatever we need to do for one another. So to use the sorority term sisterhood, I think that's what it creates." (Michelle)

- “I’ve just met so many people that I’ve been really inspired by, they give me so much energy. Every time we get together I’m so happy I have Junior League in my life.” (Megan)
- “I have met some very good friends and that’s by far the best part of it. I can think of, off the top of my head, three people who I really have enjoyed getting to know and I’ve only met them because of Junior League, and we get together outside of League functions. The value is that social connection and friendships that have been gained.” (Lilith)
- “The people I got to know is the thing that I take away most. I met a lot of really good friends.” (Sonya)

As examined in the previous section, women often became members because they wanted to develop a professional network. Naturally, they not only benefited when looking to make a job change, they used the training to advance their careers as Natalie illustrates:

There are a lot of things that men get training for in the field that I'm in, it's very much male-dominated. I would say that the training that men get or that they are encouraged to pursue is very much different from the training that I am offered or am encouraged to pursue. It's certainly been more of my own independent work that I have had to do outside of my professional life. So the Junior League has been a great outlet for that because I don't think I would have been offered it, let alone encouraged to pursue it, had I not got it in the Junior League.

Similarly, Katie has taken advantage of many training programs and workshops offered by Junior League that help her in her profession:

There are different classes, workshops, things that you can go to. I went to ones that help me at work: social media, appearing for meetings, reading annual reports, things that aren't that interesting but I thought I could go to those for free they would be good. And also things like healthy cooking, business etiquette that I thought was interesting. So I guess I've really been immersing myself.

The tension between public and private benefit – and between the League’s stated community purpose and desire to advance women as community leaders – was never

overtly addressed or acknowledged by the interviewees, but it is one that is not unique to membership-based civic associations, including Rotary Clubs as well as the League.

Paradox Three – Empower Women but not Feminist

Junior League was chosen for this study because of its long history as an all-female association, often the most prominent community organization for women's involvement. Even as traditionally-male civic associations now actively include and recruit women as members, Junior League has remained segregated. No evidence has been found to suggest the League's all-female status, its exclusionary membership policy, has been legally challenged. However, it was important to understand the merit of maintaining its segregated status from the members' perspectives.

Given Junior League's mission to empower women as community leaders, gender was expected to be a salient theme, but found the first several women interviewed did not mention or discuss the organization in gendered terms beyond their desire to meet like-minded women. As a defining feature of the organization, the de-emphasis on gender was puzzling and prompted me to ask subsequent participants to reflect on why they choose an all-women's group. Perhaps not surprisingly based on the lack of importance expressed by the first interviewees, most responses were akin to:

- "I really didn't give much thought of it."
- "I didn't want anything to do with 'we're women'."
- "I never thought about that."
- "The gender lens wasn't the selling point."
- "I don't know if I thought about it at the time."

Margaret, an active member, went so far as to say that she was initially reluctant to join because it was all women. Preferring to join a mixed-gender, young professionals group,

it took a lot of pushing by a close family member for Margaret to ultimately choose the League.

Although these women tended to distance themselves from the League's exclusionary status, as they continued to reflect on the question, several noted the encouragement and support that is cultivated among members. Courtney, who had been a member for only six months at the time of the interview, conveyed the blending of the personal and professional motivations in an all-female context. Her remarks hearken back to the League's original mission of building a network of community-minded young women:

I was kind of excited about joining the women's organization because I work in a very male-dominated field. Being in a male-dominated profession and being involved in groups that are either mixed gender or predominantly men, it's kind of nice to see young professional women can be in a group like that and build that kind of support network. I think it's important for career growth and also to form friendships and get involved in the city and in the community.

Even if it was not the selling point, most came to appreciate the all-female environment as illustrated by these comments:

- “I get much more of a safe feeling when I’m with my League friends and we’re in our business meetings. With women I think we’re a lot more supportive of each other and I didn’t really know that until I got involved.” (Megan)
- “Since joining I would say that I have appreciated the experience a lot more because there is still some of that glass ceiling going on. I have appreciated the empowerment and also the ability to recognize when a sexist thing is going on [elsewhere].” (Natalie)
- “I’m glad it is an organization that’s all women because I’ve been able to meet and connect with women in such different stages of their careers and family life.” (Lilith)
- “I think that women tend to be very supportive of one another, certainly we were when I was going through the League I think there was a social aspect and a support aspect that was very important. Because of that you were constantly encouraging each other to try something new and learn something new.” (Eva)
- “There’s that dynamic that we’re all here for the same thing, we’re all there to get down to work. I’ve been really impressed. I like seeing women as leaders. I like

knowing that women will always be leaders in the League and it's not hard for anyone to rise up in the ranks because we're all women." (Katie)

- "I like being around like-minded women. I think you draw strength from that and if there were men [in the League] I don't think it would be the same." (Michelle)

Interestingly, one long-time sustainer now in her mid-70s, Beth, who radiated a sense of pride about her Junior League service, adamantly rejected an identity as a "woman volunteer." She exclaimed:

I don't look upon myself as a women volunteer. I look at myself as a volunteer, and I think that's the most important message for women, is get over being a woman. Because you've got to get over whatever you think is unfair because if you think it's unfair, it's going to be unfair. Get over it and immerse yourself and what you're doing with other people around you, be it work or volunteerism. Then you're going to be a better person and be happier.

Beth's statement in some ways contradicts previous studies that suggest women's volunteerism upholds traditional gender roles (Ostrander 1984; Daniels 1988; Odendahl 1990). Beth's comment may reflect her extensive resume serving on the highest level nonprofit boards locally and state-wide since her time in Junior League; but it was the League experience as a young woman that provided her the confidence and skills to later succeed as a leader on male-dominated boards.

Finally, given the advancement of women in society and the emphasis on business networking, it may become difficult for the Junior League to continue to make the legal and social case for its exclusionary status. Christina, in particular, articulated a fear that the League's status as an all-women's institution may be in jeopardy:

I have to say that some of the things they emphasize at League conferences I would go to is that the reason the League could keep its female-only status was because it was an organization that benefited women and give them the leg-up that they needed. But if we open it up to be a more networking type thing then it's going to be like the Kiwanis or the Rotary and we wouldn't be able to exclude men. That makes me nervous.

Only one instance of a man challenging Junior League's all-female status has been found to date ("Gender War Over Brunch" 1996), although this challenge was not pursued through legal channels. While it is unlikely that Junior League would open its membership to men given its mission, articulating the advantages of remaining a women's association – and the work it does to cultivate female community leaders – will become increasingly important should future challenges arise.

Conclusion

Participation in the Junior League was an overwhelmingly positive experience and meaningful part of the women's lives. The friendships developed and service work completed often gave members a "sense of belonging" or a "sense of purpose." Megan articulated a feeling of fulfillment from her League activities that transcended her professional success: "I realized I can use my talents and put an organization together and set a vision and make all the plans and help people move them along to accomplish some pretty cool things."

The Junior League struggles with the same kinds of issues that many membership-based associations face: demographic changes, attracting and retaining members, adapting new technologies, governance turnover, and the ever-changing lifestyles of today's women. The three paradoxes presented in this chapter suggest areas, positive and negative, that the association may need to address in its ongoing challenge of staying true to its mission while adapting to twenty-first century changes. The findings are further discussed in comparative context and recommendations are suggested in chapter six, preceded by an examination of women's experiences in the mixed-gender association, Rotary International.

CHAPTER FIVE ROTARY CLUB FINDINGS

In response to an online story highlighting women in Rotary (Rotary International 2012), a club member named Dwight Woods commented that,

Our Monadnock Rotary Club could barely function without our skilled women members. Our current president is a woman, a woman from our club was assistant district governor. Others have written grant requests for our projects. Our club could not have become the stellar one it has become without the women members.

Woods' remarks echo what many Rotary Clubs have experienced since beginning to admit women in 1987. In many cases, women were credited with revitalizing failing clubs, while in others women simply added more volunteer capacity to already vibrant activities (Reynolds 2008). This chapter examines the lived experience of female members of Rotary International. Participants came from two large Indiana cities, although several first joined in small towns or in cities in other states before transferring into their current club. A brief history of the service club movement and Rotary International begins the chapter and is followed by a phenomenological description and interpretation of women's experiences as members since 1987.

History of Rotary International

As defined in chapter one, historically service clubs have been comprised of business professionals who hold regular meetings, with an explicit mission to provide community service but implicit mission to encourage networking among members for better business. Indeed, the key feature of Rotary membership is weekly lunch meetings that facilitate fellowship and camaraderie (Charles 1993). As membership-based associations, service clubs are hierarchically structured with an international governing body and local clubs organized by region. Traditionally, clubs used a classification

system of membership – one member from each business or business sector in the community – as a way to ensure high membership standards and fair business trading; this practice began to fade in the mid-twentieth century and is no longer or loosely followed in most clubs. Rotary is generally seen as the most influential among service clubs, even though Lions Clubs boast the most members (Charles 1993).

The rise of men's service clubs corresponded with the decline of fraternal organizations, such as the Masons and the Order of Odd-Fellows, in the early twentieth century. Briefly, fraternalism declined in response to cultural and social changes: members' doubts about the long-term stability of the organizations' insurance programs; rival entertainment venues; drying up of new blood for immigrant societies; core ethics of thrift and self-help under assault from mass consumerism; and increasing laws and regulations that hindered their insurance operations (Beito 2000; Putney 1993). Service clubs addressed several of these phenomena. Rather than seeking health or death insurance, many service club members came from the burgeoning commercial insurance industry, giving them an outlet for business promotion. Additionally, the ethic of thrift was under attack from the very middle class members of service clubs who used their membership to promote "main street boosterism" through peer-to-peer marketing (Charles 1993). Participation in service clubs better suited a middle class lifestyle in which abundant leisure and consumerism were encouraged:

Far better equipped to deal with society's new demands were the aggressive, efficiently-minded service clubs, which instead of secrecy offered service, and which instead of asylum promised worldwide, active business networks. The clubs' leaving evenings free also accommodated better with domesticity's lessening formidability, together with men's eagerness to partake of the fruits of mass-culture – radios, phonographs, and automobile rides in the country. (Putney 1993:189)

In addition, among the middle class, it was more important for men to establish their status in a selective yet public occupational-based association. Participation in the secret lodge ritual did not promote one's status in the local business community (Charles 1993).

In response to the changing economy and increasing middle class lifestyle, a young Chicago lawyer named Paul Harris created the Rotary club in 1905 as a venue for promoting and trading business since meetings rotated among members' location of employment. Later, the once business-focused Rotary amended its constitution in 1911 to remove "business interests" from its constitution, and served as a model for future clubs including Kiwanis, established in 1915, and Lions Clubs International, created in 1917. Although the three clubs recruited members from the same business class of men, both Kiwanis and Lions maintained service as their primary mission from their inception (Charles 1993).

Clubs' service activities included a wide variety of projects based on members' interests and local needs. Some clubs supported civic and municipal projects such as supporting the creation of new roads, lobbying for street signs, and providing manpower to build public parks (Forward 2003; Charles 1993). Business-related projects were also popular and included cooperative programs with the Chamber of Commerce and the promotion of ethical business standards (Charles 1993; Marden 1935). In terms of charitable or welfare work, clubs' service activities were piecemeal and unorganized. Some clubs supported community institutions such as the Salvation Army, hospitals and clinics, and the Community Chest, while others preferred to offer direct relief aid to individuals in distress (Charles 1993). Clubs' capacity to motivate and mobilize members as active community volunteers was not fully realized until much later in their history.

When men began organizing service clubs, female membership was denied because the middle class men who organized the clubs did not include women as professional equals (Charles 1993). As previously noted, women had been using the power of associations to accomplish community improvement projects for at least the previous century. But, “none of the men’s clubs acknowledged the influence of their feminine counterparts, and all three men’s clubs were anxious to lay claim to being the first organization dedicated to service” (Charles 1993:30). Although it never garnered the sheer number of members of male service clubs, the women of Junior League tackled civic needs many years before and without the distraction of business promotion. Although they were occasionally included in social activities outside regular club meetings, women were formally excluded from membership until 1987. Women’s role in Rotary, although informal and often out of sight, has since been acknowledged in its official history:

During Rotary’s first 84 years, the wives and daughters of Rotarians played a vital role in the organization’s success – regardless of whether they belonged to a formal auxiliary. Wives of club members worked alongside them in projects, were equal partners in their financial support, and were often the driving force in urging their spouses to take an active role in the organization’s leadership and humanitarian projects. (Forward 2003: 184).

Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions clubs remained all-male until 1987 when the United States Supreme Court decided in *Board of Directors, Rotary International v. Rotary Club of Duarte* that service clubs could not discriminate on the basis of sex. In response to changing social mores and women’s entrance into the paid workforce, clubs on the local level saw an opportunity to strengthen its membership base by inviting prominent local business women. In 1977, the Rotary Club of Duarte, California, a small club with only

sixteen members, admitted three professional women into active membership. When Rotary International terminated the club's charter because it was in violation of the association's bylaws, the club and two of its female members filed complaint in California Superior Court alleging that Rotary International's actions violated the state's public accommodation law (Forward 2003).

Appellate Brief (1987 EL 880553) filed by nineteen organizations interested in civil rights (sixteen specific to women's rights) in the *Rotary* case indicate wide-spread support for ending exclusionary policies. The National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund (NOW LDEF), as lead council on the brief regarding Rotary, argued that women's exclusion negatively impacted female access to the business and civic life of the community. NOW LDEF's description of discrimination against women describes club membership akin to power networks:

Private clubs provide members with an entrée to the 'Old Boys Network' which provides men with knowledgeable allies who help them advance in their careers, teach them the cast of characters, and advise them of job openings, and business opportunities. The importance of access to such networks cannot be overestimated.... Promotions and high-level jobs are often based on the personal networks forged in the closed meetings of private clubs. (1987 EL 880553 U.S. Appellate Brief, p. 6-7)

NOW argued that despite the gains women had made in the workforce, they had not yet attained the same professional status as their white male colleagues. Without career enhancing networks like those fostered among members of civic clubs, women would never have equal opportunity in the workforce.

Ultimately, the Supreme Court affirmed that Rotary clubs are like business establishments and therefore must adhere to the provisions of the public accommodation law. The Court noted that clubs ranged in size from fewer than twenty members to more

than 900, supported active membership recruitment activities, invited outside guests (including women) to participate in club meetings, and generally conducted their business in a public atmosphere (rather than in private). In these ways, Rotary clubs are more public than private in nature due to their size and otherwise inclusive nature.

Additionally, Rotary did not adequately prove that members' freedom of association would be significantly infringed by the inclusion of women. On the contrary, Justice Powell, delivering the Court's opinion, believed that by "opening membership to leading business and professional women in the community, Rotary Clubs are likely to obtain a more representative cross-section of community leaders with a broadened capacity for service." Finally, as in preceding cases, the infringement of expressive freedom was justified because it served California's compelling interest to eliminate discrimination against women.

Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary clubs moved quickly to officially amend their governing constitutions to remove male as a condition of membership. Following the May 1987 decision, Rotary International issued a policy statement admitting women in United States Rotary Clubs. It was not until 1989, however, at the association's Council on Legislation meeting, that its governing documents were officially changed (Rotary International 2009). As previously noted, women's membership has been held up as way to bolster declining membership trends (Charles 1993). As of June 2012, 215,207 women belonged to Rotary International worldwide, comprising 17.69% of total membership (Rotary International 2012).

The present study has its origins in that 1987 Supreme Court decision, describing the experiences of women who joined shortly thereafter and as clubs adjusted their

organizational cultural accordingly. The following sections provide a complex description of women's lived experience categorized in four essential features: joining, assimilating, leading, and volunteering. The chapter concludes with an examination of the ongoing tension between business and community service.

Joining Rotary Club

The women interviewed in this study joined Rotary between 1988 and the late 1990s, with one recent joiner in 2010. As executives in the local community, most of the women interviewed first joined the local Rotary club at the invitation of a colleague or close business associate. Jennifer was the longest member interviewed, having joined in 1988. She was encouraged to join after becoming the executive director of a large nonprofit organization by her predecessor who explained that being involved in Rotary, “gives you an entrée to other people, different organizations, and of course, if you're a nonprofit, you're always out there raising money.” Others were invited by close business associates, like Ann who explained:

I was approached by a person who was recruiting members, someone who I'd done business with. He asked if I'd be interested in joining. I thought, 'well, it's kind of interesting, but it's a long way downtown [for lunch time meetings], I'm not sure it makes sense.' He continued to try to convince me about the club, the size of the club, and all the good things they did. So eventually I consented, but probably wasn't as active the first few years of my membership.

For these women, their initial motivations were business oriented. As a member, one represents herself as a professional and as a representative of one's company. By representing the company, the individual sends a message that his or her employer cares about the local economy and makes a positive contribution to the community. Holly provides another typical example of women invited by a direct colleague for the purposes of business marketing:

I joined in 1998. One of our partners in the CPA firm I worked for believed very strongly that our firm should be involved in the community. Of course, that's part of the marketing you have to do, but that's how you establish your client base. You have to apply and have to be accepted. So he was a member and he was my sponsor.

For much of its history, Rotary clubs “fit the stereotype of an exclusive, or at least semi-exclusive men's association” (Geelhoed 2000: ix). Given its selective reputation, a few women noted they were attracted to the club's status in the community. Because the club was large and well-known, it was a sign of prestige to be asked to join. Therefore, the potential member was unlikely to turn down the invitation. Holly expressed that,

The Rotary club is *the* club in town. When I joined we probably had 300 members and they were really high level business people in town. So naturally if someone asked if you would like to be a member of the club, you would say yes!

And Linda added:

I joined in 1990. I was maybe the 60th woman in Indiana. And the reason I did it? Because an influential woman asked. She said, ‘we want more women.’ We had worked together when we were in the arts circles together. So I said, ‘sure.’ Then you really had to have a sponsor, it was pretty strict. So I knew it was a big deal to be asked.

As both a status symbol and a venue for person-to-person business marketing, Rotary clubs, especially the large downtown clubs represented in this study, continue to uphold the reputation of a semi-exclusive association.

Most of the women in this study followed the typical path to membership through a business colleague or associate. Beth ultimately followed this pattern, but only after having first declined membership. Beth elucidates her unique path:

I was invited to join the first year women were invited, maybe the second year. They had two women the first year. And we have a club of about 200. I refused. I refused for this reason – I had already been on many boards with men and I'm not talking about the kinds of organizations like Rotary, but hospital boards, hospital foundation

boards, university committees and boards, where maybe I was the only woman. I was invited there because of the skills that I had to offer as a person. And I loved it. But I did not want to go into a group that really wasn't quite ready for women. So I did not join Rotary when I was invited the first time.

It was not until 1998 that she accepted an invitation to join at a point that she believed the circumstances were acceptable:

When my male attorney invited me to be a member, then I thought that was an appropriate time for me to join. But previously it was the first two women in Rotary that invited me.

Beth's story is consistent with other accounts that suggests women often preferred to join as a cohort rather than being held up as the first woman (Geelhoed 2000) or were initially reluctant to join because they did not want to be seen as a pioneer or "rabble-rouser" for fear of hurting her career (Zane 1991). For those who did join in the early years of membership, women tread carefully in the male-dominated environment in an attempt to assimilate without causing agitation or disruption in club affairs.

Unlike many of the Junior League women who sought out a network through membership, the women of Rotary joined by invitation. However, they were similarly motivated by the opportunity to network professionally. Sharon expressed her motivations:

From a business stand point it was an opportunity to interact with people I would not normally interact with on a day-to-day basis in my industry. I knew that I would be able to associate with individuals who weren't just in my field. I was interested in that, plus contributing to the community as a whole.

Similarly, Chloe, a nonprofit executive, expressed the duality of business and service-minded motivations:

That fact that I work in the nonprofit sector and we depend so heavily on volunteers and service, and growing up in Girl

Scouting, service in something you do. So I think that in itself is something that interested me, just the service aspect of the organization. I decided it would be good to get involved outside of the nonprofit I worked for and to have an impact.

Linda provided the only exception in the group; she was largely motivated by her father's membership. Linda shared many memories of her father's involvement in Rotary when she was growing up, such as supporting his club's food stand at the county fair and attending parades in which the Rotary club marched. As a self-described non-joiner, Linda initially joined to share the experience with her father. Linda recounted that after she was asked by an influential female colleague:

I decided that, ok, I'll do Rotary. Dad will be excited and I'll do it for a year or so. I was in and I've had such a good time I never looked back. But I [initially] didn't see myself staying.

Reluctant at first to commit, she was the most emphatic and enthusiastic about her participation and love of Rotary. She continues to share Rotary experiences with her father including attending a recent international convention together.

As a motivating for members, the connection between Rotary and business is not just an historic one as described earlier, it is still very much part of the fabric of the organizational culture. The tension between the association's service to community and service to business will be discussed further in the final section of this chapter.

Assimilating into Club Life

In order to understand the process of integrating into club activities and the weekly lunch meetings, all of the women were asked to describe their experiences in the first few years of their membership. While women comprise 17% of total membership in Rotary, the women in this study belonged to clubs with 25 to 30 percent women. Although these clubs were successful in attracting women from the local business

community, as members the women still had to navigate a club culture that is male dominated. Linda described the environment as it was just two years after women first joined:

When I first got in there, it was still a whole much of men. Some of the jokes at the podium were just a little off-color enough that maybe women shouldn't have been in there. There was a lot of sports chat. So they had to smooth over presentations.

Others attributed the difficulty of becoming part of the club to its large size. Chloe, when commenting on the difference between the large urban club and the small-town club she previously belonged to, noted that "I never felt unwelcomed as a woman, but it was much harder to become a part of." In cases where the woman was not properly oriented to the club, as Ann mentioned, a strong connection to club life did not happen quickly.

When asked specifically if the women faced any negative resistance to their membership, many of the women noted the sometimes intimidating environment of being part of a very small number of women in a very large room of men. Sharon described the environment:

When I came to this club [from another club out of state], I found it was mostly white men and there was a lot of joking and silliness that I didn't appreciate as a member, as a professional. And that went on for several years, but it's changed considerably in the last few years. There's more diversity in the club now.

Later, Sharon said that her negative experiences were "when I heard jokes that I was embarrassed and angry about." Inappropriate comments or jokes, intended or not, did not disappear quickly.

Among the most salient experiences among the women described was deciding where to sit at the weekly lunch meeting. Although lunch seating was unassigned and spread among several tables, often there was a "tradition" of where certain members sat,

especially among older male members. Several cited some anxiety about deciding where to sit for lunch. Jennifer, the longest member of those interviewed said that it was,

Scary at first. When you walked into room of about 150 people having lunch every week, and maybe twelve of them were women.

Ann, who joined four years after Jennifer, described similar feelings:

It was kind of hard to walk into this big room where a lot of people were sitting together and we tried to break those barriers down because I don't think I'm the only one who had that feeling. I was pretty bold. One time I probably sat at a table of guys I wasn't supposed to sit down with ... Later I learned that table saves it for themselves. But that was okay, it didn't bother me. I figure, if I'm here to meet new people, I might as well do that. But, you always had this kind of feeling of where should I sit? Will I be welcome? And you always were, but you have that feeling you won't be.

Even for Stephanie, having joined in 2010 the newest member of those interviewed, finding the right place to sit for lunch was an important part of finding her niche. She illustrated that even with women fully accepted as new members, deciding where to sit may be an experience of all new members:

Originally it was a little awkward because I didn't have any close friends and my goal was to meet new people so I felt more welcome. I know the goal in any service group is that if you don't feel as if you're part of the 'in' crowd quickly you're likely to see no benefit to being a member and walk away. So I'd go into meetings and try to sit at a different table each week and talk to the people at my table about what I did and find out what they did and find our commonalities. Then I started sitting at one table more than others, it was the rowdy table. That made it fun.

Finally, Eva, a member for seventeen years who joined in the fourth or fifth class of women has seen the club environment change from resentment to acceptance to intentionally attracting new, younger members. Eva reflected:

At one point I was involved in doing a survey for improving the club. One of the surveys came back and said, 'get rid of the women.' That was pretty pointed. And there was always this table of men and

you would never dare to sit down at this table. Well, every now and then one of us would sit down at that table and they were just furious, literally people would be sitting next to you and never look at you, just act like you were a wall. I don't remember being angry about it, it was always just kind of humorous.

These experiences suggest that the women felt neither unwelcome nor particularly welcome at the start of their membership. It took time and greater involvement through committee assignments and service projects to fully integrate into club life. Part of their assimilation also came through social activities and cultivating a sense of sociability that made membership “a really good time” and “it’s just fun!” Leisure pursuits organized by the club today – including member receptions at a local basketball game or NFL football stadiums – are not far removed from the sociability enjoyed by the earliest members when “weekly luncheons ... were gregarious, back-slapping occasions” (Geelhoed 2000:xi).

Leading and Leadership

Leadership development is an essential part of the Rotary experience. In his chronicle of Rotary’s history Forward (2003) explains:

Rotarians are exposed to leadership training almost from the moment they join a club. As a committee chair, a club officer, people who once may have dreaded public speaking find themselves compelled to present their ideas for new service projects to the clubs with a mix of young and old members, men and women, progressive thinkers and die-hard traditionalists. Regional Rotary leadership seminars provide valuable help in personal and professional growth The leadership skills developed in Rotary also prove helpful in their business and professional careers. (p. 220)

Given these features of the association’s organizational structure, it is unsurprising that all of the women interviewed have been involved in the club in a variety of committee positions including service on the club’s board of directors. Eva, for example, noted that

she has been chair of the history and membership committees and has previously sat on the board of directors. "I've enjoyed it," she remarked.

Board service in particular became perhaps the most important way the women became fully integrated into club affairs while offering them greater understanding of the organization as a whole. Ann explained that,

The biggest thing that pulled me in was being asked to serve on the board. So obviously I was doing something that people knew who I was, serving on some committees and things like that. I was asked to run for election to the board, which I did, and was elected. I think that's where I really got more involved.

Linda specifically noted that she felt she was doing important work as a board member.

She said,

At board meetings, there's discussion, good input. So you feel like it's not just rubber stamping. You feel like you really have a voice. And again, when you are asking people to help, or help you, a lot of people say yes, so you're not fearful of who is with you.

Board service was instrumental in building a basis of support for Ann's eventual election as president and key to understanding club operations from all angles at the same time it required a substantial time commitment, especially for these women who also held executive jobs. After she served on the board, Ann ran for club secretary, to be in line for club president. For her and others, that five-year commitment meant Rotary just "became a part of my life."

For three participants, serving as club president was the most meaningful part of her membership. Holly explained that it was so memorable because it was a culmination of her previous ten years as a member and the reward for rising through the leadership ranks:

Getting to be president. The years and process it took, because I live outside of town. Becoming a member and then getting people to know

me and what I did and the whole process of establishing your base so that people want you to be president of this organization. To have them get to know you and trust you, it just takes time.

Holly went on to note that:

Everyone was really supportive and helping in moving me up the ranks. I have to say though, it was more of my women friends who wanted another woman as president, because I think I was the fourth woman president of this club.

Chloe remembered first being asked to run in the club's annual election:

I was totally shocked I was being asked to run. And I will tell you, over that week the reason I probably agreed to run was my mother, because of the impact of her volunteerism and service to the community. I felt that she would want me to do this. And then I was even more shocked that I was elected!

Jennifer was the club's second female president. She too emphasized the time commitment it required:

I had been approached by a few people who wanted to know if I was interested in running for office. And I did. You know, you don't just become president. When you say yes to that it's a five year commitment. You go through secretary, vice-president, president-elect, president, then past-president. You're busy for five years. And that to me was challenging, and it was also welcome. I could do a lot more by going through those chairs and holding those different positions.

Stephanie, currently in line to be president in three years, expressed some trepidation about the time commitment, but overall sought the role with excitement:

The presidential year from what I understand is pretty much an overwhelming commitment. But I have tried to plan my work within my day to be where I'll be able to dedicate that time to Rotary during the time I need to.

Leadership positions also provided a platform for making connections to more people in and outside the club. Long term involvement, as these women have shown, often becomes much more than just a source of networking, it became of source of great personal fulfillment.

Volunteering

Since 1911, when Rotary International made service its explicit mission, clubs have taken on a wide variety of community service projects based on the needs of its local community as described earlier in this chapter. Community projects are as diverse as the clubs themselves but often address problems related to public health, youth education, and environmental preservation. The Rotary Foundation is the association's charitable arm that solicits individual contributions and maintains grantmaking programs. Best known for its work on polio eradication worldwide, the Rotary Foundation also supports long-term projects related to health, hunger alleviation, and human development in addition to a wide variety of education programs connected to international peace and conflict resolution (The Rotary Foundation 2009). Although separate legal entities, Rotary International and Rotary Foundation are very much tied together. Many of the largest clubs also manage their own affiliated foundation to accept charitable contributions and administer larger grants to local nonprofit organizations.

Local clubs organize volunteer project to varying degrees and there is no required amount of volunteering an individual member must complete each year. While it is highly encouraged to be active in club-organized service, it is possible a member does very little service through his or her membership. Participants in this study varied in the amount of community service done. Like the women in Junior League, participants'

service included both external community service and internal service through committee leadership positions. Leadership has already been portrayed as an essential part of their Rotary experience, but it was also described by the women in terms of service to the organization.

As depicted by study participants, volunteer projects ranged from park and nature trail maintenance to larger international projects that delivered medical equipment to underdeveloped countries. Among other external volunteer commitments, education related programs were common. Holly described mentoring a local college student:

We have a mentoring program for different students in the colleges here in town. And so I volunteered for that.... In the mentoring program you met your students and used the whole year, depending on what the student wanted to do, talking about what you do and making different connections for them. Although they're not members of the club they get to meet other people that help them in their careers.

Likewise, Linda became very involved in the club's education committee. The committee was approached by the local public school superintendent and asked to make a three year commitment to adopt a school by getting to know the students and their needs through a variety of programs, such as sponsoring the annual spelling bee.

In addition to providing direct service, clubs often organize annual fundraising events, as Beth described:

They have a fundraiser right now that's a luncheon with a speaker. They hope all Rotarians will give \$100 for the lunch....The also give once a year money to teachers for special projects that can't be funded through the school corporations. They give maybe \$10,000; it's a good amount that they spread out around the schools. They don't do multiple projects during the year.

Fundraising activities are a regular part of club affairs, often more so than volunteer projects that require members to interact with direct beneficiaries of social service programs. Although members like Holly expressed a personal commitment to volunteerism, she was not hesitant to admit that “we’re not very much of a hands-on club, we mostly do fundraising then giving those funds away.”

For Sharon, Rotary service was closely tied to her personal interest in international issues. Along with her husband, also a member of Rotary, she has made a number of international trips, visiting schools and hospitals to deliver supplies. She fondly recalled:

We’ve had some experiences that were extra special. I spoke about international and with Rotary my husband and I have gone to Jamaica and Kenya and most recently to Guatemala because of Rotary. So we have friends that are in clubs in all those places. I don’t know if I would have had those experiences if it hadn’t been through Rotary. I’d still go visit, but it just makes it more meaningful to see how Rotary really makes a difference in many communities throughout the world.

Sharon and her husband were not involved in other club volunteer projects, but it was clear that their membership was an important venue for carrying out their personal expression of service.

A number of the participants classified their internal club commitments as service. While leadership experiences were previously described as an essential part of membership, it was also an important way for these women to serve the club. In addition to her enthusiasm for community service projects, Linda, for example, expressed the importance of her service on the club’s nominating committee:

I was on the nominating committee to actually choose the next seven board members for the club. If my job is just choosing them, that’s one thing, but if it’s talking to them and telling them what it’s like to be a

board member, it's cool to say, 'you know, it's not that hard and yet it's fun. And you'll be around when it's the 100th anniversary.' So you have to make sure they realize what's on the docket, share your enthusiasm and hope they say yes.

Similarly, Jennifer mentioned her work on a Habitat for Humanity House the club helped to build, but, she emphasized, "most of my service has been to the club in leadership positions." After her term as the club's second female president, she has taken her Rotary service to the district level. She depicted her responsibilities as a district representative:

In recent years I've spread my service out to the district. After you're president of the club you're eligible to be assistant to the governor of the district. So for 3 years I was assistant to the governor. I traveled around to other clubs in our district, representing the governor at the time who couldn't be at everything. That was an interesting experience, I really liked that. Recently I have been working on the president-elect training seminars. I've chaired two district conferences and I'm still working on the district conference now but not as chair. I like that position too. On the district level I've learned even more about Rotary and the different types of projects other clubs do. And, again, it's an interesting way to meet more people. So, that's what I do now.

Finally, a number of participants included service to their club's affiliated charitable foundation. Holly, also a past club president, now takes care of the foundation's financial records and accounting. Linda also served on the foundation board and enjoyed learning about community needs and making grants to worthy projects. And for Sharon, who highlighted her international interests, involvement in the foundation was the other notable aspect of her membership, as she said:

I'm vice president of the foundation board. We give out over \$200,000 a year to local organizations and to club projects. And, to me, that's very exciting. I'm really enjoying that and hope to stay in that and would consider more of a leadership role in that.

Despite the range of service-related activities these women undertook, only two articulated a strong personal meaning or fulfillment from volunteering. Linda expressed a feeling of pride and accomplishment from volunteering that fueled her desire to do more:

Just being there, you know the power of just participating. You just want to do it again. It's like, 'yeah, I'm gonna sign up again this year!

Stephanie, despite her relative newness to the club, thoughtfully reflected on what the club's service meant to her:

Rotary is the first organization I've really been active in that really focuses on community. How do we make this community better? You've got your chambers of commerce, your economic development orgs and others that are working to do the same things but it's always at a business level, it's really not that quality of life – and it goes actually beyond that quality of life to a deeper sense of really working together for the common good of all, rather than any personal agendas.

To a somewhat lesser degree than the women of Junior League, Rotary members found ways to cultivate personal interests through their volunteerism, although the sense of fulfillment was not expressed as strongly. Rather, Rotary members were more likely to portray volunteerism as an obligation of civic life as evidenced by these typical comments:

- “I believe that's what you should do: if you have the ability to give back in any way, give back. And for me it's volunteering. If I'm going to be part of an organization, then I'm going to contribute to it.” (Jennifer)
- Volunteering, it just seems like a natural part of life.... It's just what you do.” (Ann)
- “I think it's very important to continue to be part of the community more than just going to work and earning an income....I think it's important to give back, I think that's part of my value system and beliefs. That it's important to help educate and give people opportunities and help out where you can.” (Chloe)
- “I think that's what we have to do as an individual. It's what makes our lives better.” (Holly)
- “I just feel like as a citizen in a community that you have a responsibility to give back to that community. I am involved in several organizations, locally and

nationally. They are organizations I really believe in because I think they're trying to make a difference in the community and the world." (Sharon)

Business and Service

Rotary International's slogan since it first decided itself to service in 1911 has been is "He profits most who serves best." For more than 100 years, the motto has been a constant reminder that business success is directly tied to one's community service (Charles 1993). Rotary historian Forward (2003) declared, "Business and professional life are the bedrock of the Rotary movement, and vocational service has always been a significant force in promoting honor, integrity, and trustworthiness in the business world" (p. 148). Given its organizational history and culture, it is reasonable that Rotary Clubs have continued to serve both business and community. Below the surface of the duality of these missions, one implicit and the other explicit, raises the question of the association's greatest beneficiaries.

First, as previously described, several women expressed their desire for business networking as an initial reason they joined Rotary. Especially as a large downtown club comprised of 400 corporate professionals, it is no doubt that it is an important venue for business networking and interacting with community members to which they might not otherwise have access. Several women noted the status of their club in the community, as noted earlier, and accordingly, "if you're looking to make business connections, that's where you want to be," said Holly. For example, Jennifer was encouraged to join Rotary because it would give her "an entrée to other people, different organizations," which was especially important in her position as a nonprofit executive which required fundraising.

When asked about the value of their membership, the participants almost solely cited the personal benefit of business networking. As in the case of the Junior League, it

is the individual members who perhaps benefit more, despite its service oriented mission.

Eva stated that her membership was a valuable for her personal life because, “I’m able to keep my business name out there.” Likewise, Beth explained that

The value of the membership is to really meet people in the community, getting to know them, they’re contacts if something comes up and you need something, you’ve met them at Rotary. You give them a call, they know who you are, and you got your foot in the door.

Beth continued to unapologetically describe the club as a business venue, downplaying any service it provided as practically peripheral:

Rotary is for people in business, and the objective of it when it was started was for men to get together and share business, to get together to discuss community issues, national issues.

And even for Stephanie, who took great pride in the club’s service mission, described the club in terms of business:

I sell it from the networking aspect. This is a great organization to get involved in if you want to get to know and work with and have relationships with the decision makers in town. That really appeals to people because it matters from a business perspective.

Linda admitted that, “You’re supposed to network, but you’re not supposed to do blanket mailings to everybody.” For these women, the value of membership is seen in terms of personal and professional benefits to be acquired rather than as an expression of personal ethics. Although its mission has been service since 1911, business improvement is still very much a part of the association’s culture, as evidenced by these women’s experiences. Given its history and membership demographics, the emphasis on business, even if informal, is not at all surprising.

Ultimately, the connections these women made with other members were key to their integration into regular club life, including formal networking and informal friendships. Linda expressed the strong feeling that, “People are all there for the right reasons,” and continued to describe how cultivating relationships generated greater involvement in club activities:

You get to be close with so many friends. I’ve forged lots of friendships through Rotary. So when somebody asks me to do something, I stop, my kids are out of the house now too...I think, ‘I could do that.’

Making connections with others also drew some respondents into a particular service project or to participate on a certain committee which further integrated them into club life. Chloe confidently remarked that,

The long term benefits of her membership have been, friends and networking. No doubt about it. Rotarians are wonderful people to begin with. And you get to meet so many more people. And your business and your social networking just expands greatly.

Eva found meaningful relationships in merging business and personal relationships:

Rotary is more of a business networking opportunity but I find the friendships wonderful there too, enriching and encouraging in a different way than it would be with just a women’s group. In Rotary it’s more of business encouragement.

Business encouragement, networking, and personal friendships all directly benefit the members themselves primarily and their employers secondarily. When also considering that the women’s volunteer service was “hands off,” not with direct recipients, it is clear that Rotary primarily serves its members. The overwhelming benefits gained by its members are especially problematic given Rotary’s motto, “Service Above Self.” For most club members, including the women in this study, Rotary has mostly served their own personal and professional interests.

Conclusion

This chapter described business fellowship and camaraderie infused with a sense of service as the essence of the Rotary experience. These findings are in line with Rotary International's promotional materials that emphasize fellowship as equally important as community service (Geelhoed 2000; Rotary International 2013). Clubs are called to provide sufficient opportunities for both fellowship and service through engaging weekly lunch programs. Between these priorities, rises a tension between business and service that brings into question Rotary's local impact, or lack thereof, in addressing its community's most pressing needs. The next chapter will further address this tension in comparison with the Junior League and discuss the study's implications.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study concerned women's lived experience as members of an all-female voluntary association, Junior League, and a mixed-gender voluntary association, Rotary International. It asked, what are the essential features of the experience of women who are members of these community service oriented associations? In short, the study sought to understand the nature of women's membership and volunteerism in a comparative context. This chapter summarizes the study, discusses the findings in comparative perspective, and puts forward theoretical and practical implications.

Summary of Study

Guided by hermeneutic phenomenology, a descriptive and interpretive research approach that seeks to understand how individuals make meaning of particular experiences, this study examined the lived experience of twenty-six women in voluntary, service associations. Nineteen women in Junior League shared their experiences as members of an all-female association. Nine women in Rotary International, a mixed-gender but still predominately-male service club, represented their experiences as part of a traditionally-male domain. Two women were included who experienced both phenomena.

Participants completed a semi-structured interview that covered their decision to join the association, experiences as a member, volunteer, and leader. Women were also asked to reflect on the value of their membership. Interviews were transcribed and thematically coded line-by-line that eventually became the basis of the essential features described in chapters four and five. Case study methods were also employed to provide

additional layers of depth and context in comparative perspective as presented later in this chapter.

Both associations studied went through periods of organizational change as they faced outside pressures regarding their membership policies. Junior League responded to pressure to diversity its membership in the 1970s by eliminating its exclusive membership procedures. A decade later, in response to both external and internal pressure and a United States Supreme Court ruling, Rotary International amended its constitution to allow women as members. Overall, members' experiences were more similar than they were different, sharing the experiences of joining, volunteering, and leading. In Rotary, women also described a distinct process of assimilating into the male-dominated weekly meetings. The essential features of membership are summarized in table two below.

Table Two: Essential Features of Membership

Rotary	Essential Feature	Junior League
✓	Joining – Women became members at the invitation of a friend, colleague, or business associate. In Rotary, new members were sponsored by the invitee. In Junior League, women most often attended a recruitment event before applying through its open membership process	✓
✓	Assimilating – The process by which women integrated into club activities; especially salient at Rotary's weekly lunch meetings	
✓	Volunteering – Women participated in a variety of volunteer service both internal to the association's bureaucratic governing structures or externally with community organizations. Most often volunteering did not include work with direct beneficiaries.	✓
✓	Leading – Members developed leadership skills by taking on committee assignments, leading service projects, or serving on the governing board. Leadership often culminated in a term as club/league president.	✓

Discussion

As the preceding table suggests, the experiences of women in Junior League and Rotary are more similar than they are different, despite differences in organizational cultures and histories. Women in Junior League, motivated by both their interest in service and a venue for networking, often sought out membership through a like-minded friend or through an open recruitment event. Women in Rotary were more often directly recruited by a colleague or business associate. Because Rotary requires new members to be sponsored, women were often motivated by the association's stature in the business community.

The findings reveal that motivations to join service-based associations are most often a complex mix of an individual's altruistic and self-interested desires. The decision to join was not based on a calculated cost-benefit analysis in which the potential member weighed the personal or community benefits against the costs of membership (Tschirhart 2006). Rather, the women described multiple motivations all present simultaneously, although to differing degrees. The women in Junior League, in particular, expressed both their desire to find like-minded women with which to network (self-interest) at the same time they were attracted to the League's community service (altruistic). While the community service motivation was less salient among the women in Rotary, many expressed familial influences for their volunteerism that suggest the association's service mission was considered, even if less important than its status and opportunities for business advancement.

The slight difference in motivational emphasis may be due to life cycle effects. Women were much more likely to join Junior League early in their career, often soon

after graduating from college. Given its historic mission in training young women for community service, it is expected that today's young professionals would find League activities attractive. This finding supports both the research that indicates Generations X and Y are just as likely to join associations than were older generations (Brooks 2006). Rotary, on the other hand, due to its emphasis on building the local business community, is more likely to attract mid-career professionals or those already established in a particular profession or trade. Entry-level professionals are, therefore, slow to join an association like Rotary as was true of two women interviewed in this study who were very active in Junior League in the 1970s (as stay-at-home mothers) and joined Rotary in their 40s or 50s as working professionals. This finding supports Dalton and Dignam's (2007) conclusion that the stages of career development are more likely to drive membership than are fixed generational characteristics.

The process of joining described in this study also supports the notion that preexisting social networks are important avenues for membership recruitment. The potential member has to be informed and introduced to the organization, generally by an individual through which she has an existing interpersonal relationship (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980). For the members of Rotary, who required a membership sponsor, the importance of social networks is obvious. But even for the members of Junior League who sought out a venue for their interest in community service, they almost always knew someone who was already a member or who joined simultaneously at an open recruitment event. In addition to the social network, the individuals have structural availability for organizational participation, another key factor in the recruitment process (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980). For the members of

service associations, their availability almost always included an accommodating job that paid their membership dues (as is often the case for Rotary), offered the flexibility to attend meetings during the day, or supported the individual's leadership responsibilities.

Once women joined their respective association, as new members they navigated a process of assimilation. Assimilation was most prominent for the women of Rotary who joined in the 1990s at a time when Rotary clubs were still in the early years of accepting women as members. As the description in chapter five reveals, it took several years for the weekly meetings to be "smoothed over" in a way that welcomed both men and women. This experience may be over-represented in the sample because of the length of participants' membership. The findings also do not account for the experiences of former members who might have felt particularly unwelcome or turned off by the club's culture that they subsequently ended their membership. Future interviews with younger female members might reveal the assimilation process as a less prominent experience moving forward as the overall organizational culture has changed.

Women in Junior League did not describe a process of assimilation except to highlight the committee or volunteer assignments they held in their provisional, or first year of membership. The provisional year is designed to assimilate new members into the internal functions of the association and the external community issues it seeks to address. For example, Lucy described how her provisional year was exceptional because she was integrated into a smaller group of new members led by a mentor who counseled the new members on League matters. The small group mentoring made for a close knit social group, making membership a much more personal experience.

Both associations are designed to allow members ample opportunity to take on leadership roles from low-level committee assignments to the highest level of board governance. Leadership development is an explicit part of Junior League's mission in training women to become civic leaders. As an essential feature of membership, this study confirms previous research which shows that members take on and enjoy leadership positions as a way to develop tangible skills (Markham, Walters, and Bonjean 2001). For Rotary, leadership development is an important part of professional development nurtured through membership, although it is not part of its explicit mission. In both cases, leadership training activities – from one-time workshops to multi-day institutes – were described by participants.

Taken together, the experiences of joining, assimilating, leading, and volunteering create a ladder of increasing engagement that often culminated in a term as club or League president. For the women in Junior League, it is expected they use their training in volunteerism and leadership in service to other community institutions and nonprofit governing boards. And, as was the case of the two sustaining members of Junior League in this study, they may later become members of their local Rotary Club. For the Rotarian women in this study, it seemed that they became less involved in club activities after their time as president. Interviews did not probe into the causes or reasons for their reduced participation, therefore further research would be required to understand the causes and effects of reduced engagement post-presidency.

In both associations, a tension between individual and community or business interests was uncovered. Upon further reflection, it may be true that most membership-based groups whose primary mission is community service face a similar tension given

that the very definition of a membership organization is that it first serves the needs of its members. However, it is worth considering how such tension manifests itself in different ways due to organizational history and culture. In Rotary, it was shown that, in both historic and contemporary times, the business sector benefits more from the association's promotion of ethical practices and professional networking than does local charitable causes. While not to negate the community service it undertakes, Rotary is not generally "a hands-on club" as described by one interviewee.

Junior League, on the other hand, has a long history of community service projects that have often become institutionalized services in the nonprofit community, as the example of the health care van for the homeless population described in chapter four illustrates. In Junior League the tension more prominently exists between its community service and the direct benefits to its members. Participants enthusiastically described the importance of networking and leadership training that often propelled them in their career. Community service, while important, was not the focus of a member's experience and few reported direct interaction with the beneficiaries of the League's activities.

Finally, somewhat surprisingly given the history of both organizations, the participants' did not describe their experiences in terms of gender. Only when the women of Junior League were directly prompted to consider their experiences in all-female association did they reflect on the benefits of being such. For the women in Rotary, still a small majority of the overall membership base, participants considered themselves fully integrated into the "old boys' club." These findings provide fresh perspectives on previous research showing that women's volunteerism upholds traditional gender roles (Ostrander 1984; Daniels 1988; Odendahl 1990). Rather, for working women of the

twenty-first century, volunteerism is a source of empowerment – civically and professionally.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study supports and extends the reflexive modernization theory which posits that we live in a social environment that is multi-dimensional (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). Rather than motivations that fall into neatly prescribed categories such as career advancement or as a social outlet, as delineated by the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary, Snyder, and Stukas 1996) the participants of this study reveal more complex motivations for joining and volunteering. By joining a service-based organization, members are automatically part of a collective body, but they describe the values and benefits of their membership reflexively, in terms of themselves as individuals and professionals. While their altruistic and self-interested desires may at first appear to be in tension, according to reflexive modernization the individual member does not experience the duality of motivations as a tension rather than the reality of their social life.

Furthermore, in the reflexive volunteering context, “the relation between volunteer and professional is ambiguous” (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003:179). The blending of volunteer and professional work is also supported in the current study for both women’s experiences as members and volunteers. As illustrated in chapter four, participants described membership as a venue to express their care for the community as well as develop tangible leadership skills and networking that improved their professional lives. With a slightly different emphasis, the women in Rotary also conveyed an appreciation for the association’s community service and its direct connection to business

improvement. Again, the point is that experiences or motivations need not be set in hard and fast categories, but that individuals make sense of their membership or volunteering in dynamic ways.

The findings also support the reflexive modernization notion that individuals today do not necessarily volunteer for the sense of belonging to a particular cause, but are equally interested in the pragmatic services or activities offered (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). As shown above, members do not join simply for the sake of joining, but because of a dynamic interplay of personal biography and community-minded interests. For example, in associations more broadly, especially professional and trade associations, networking and leadership go hand-in-hand as essential components of membership satisfaction, especially for the most active members (Dalton and Dignam 2007). As the thematic analysis of this study showed, participants found networking and leadership training guided by a collective mission to be important aspects of membership.

Implications for Future Research

Pathways to joining, processes of assimilation, and levels of participation are important considerations for the viability of most membership-based associations. The social environment for members, potential members, and former members is always changing, therefore, the study of members' experiences should be continued to provide updated information for historical and sociological perspectives as well as for practical tools that may guide association managers. Specific recommendations for future research on this topic are as follows:

1. Replicate this study's methodology on a larger scale that includes members of similar associations such as Lions, Kiwanis, Optimists, and Altrusa clubs. In size and

history, Lions and Kiwanis are most similar to Rotary International while Optimists and Altrusa are more similar to Junior League. Altrusa members, in particular, would further expand the gender findings of this study because it is a predominately-female association.

2. Because this study's participants came from large, urban associations, replicate this methodology on a larger scale to include various geographic differences. First, a sample of members from smaller communities in the Midwest would provide immediate comparisons with the current study. Second, expanding the study to include other regions in the United States would account for contextual differences due to geography.

3. To address member exit, the present study could be expanded with a sample of former members. Former members, those who discontinued membership, may have valuable insights, particularly negative experiences and/or motivations for terminating membership that are not revealed among the satisfied members in this study.

Understanding why and when members choose to exit an association may further extend reflexive modernization theory while providing practical suggestions for association managers.

4. To further understand the gender dynamics at work in comparative context, replicate this study's methodology with a sample of men in Rotary Clubs and an all-male association. Such a study is particularly necessary in developing a gendered theory of the nonprofit sector (Themudo 2009).

5. Finally, given that both Junior League and Rotary are international associations future research using the phenomenological approach should be conducted. A cross-cultural study might identify other essential experiences that are unique to associational life in cultures. One way to approach this would be to select countries in the order they

joined the international association, starting in Western Europe and expanding into Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Closing Comments

This study challenges the notion that changes in the association landscape is in some way threatening a unique feature of American culture. While not to dismiss real organizational challenges faced by associations, there are reasons to be optimistic about associations in social life. As recounted in this study, members find a twofold value in their members: as an expression of personal ethics and as an avenue for professional advancement. Individuals continue to desire engagement with an association that satisfies both their collectivist (community-oriented) and reflexive (personal / professional) interests. Indeed, as the participants stated, they found great worth in the professional networking, skills and leadership development, and personal friendships developed through their membership. And, as a member's involvement increases, so does the significance she places on her membership. In these ways, membership is both a positive return on investment for the dues paid and a worthwhile investment of one's time and energies.

The research presented here challenges association executives and volunteer leaders to think about how they can harness these complex understandings of service to better attract and retain members. Considering career and life-cycle factors is of particular importance. Acknowledging that entry-level professionals may be late to join associations, the service associations studied here must pay particular attention to recognizing and adjusting programming for young professionals who already have a wealth of volunteer experience coming out of high school and college. At the same time,

associations, especially Junior League, must watch for opportunities to attract new members who have little or no previous volunteer experience.

This isn't your mother's charity. This isn't your father's club. Associational life evolves and changes. It is true for the 100-year old organizations of this study. It can also be seen in the emergence of new types of volunteer associations such as giving circles and other young professional groups in which there are no dues to cover administrative expenses. Based on their structural availability, individuals seek out associations that suit their lifestyle and personal beliefs. Voluntary associations struggling to attract and retain members would be well advised to carefully listen to its current members' experiences while remaining flexible enough to adapt quickly and embrace change.

APPENDIX A: Interview Guide

Opening statement: Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. As you already know, I am conducting my dissertation research to understand and describe the experiences of women who belong to service associations including Junior League and Rotary Clubs. Before we begin, I would like to go over the study's information sheet, which describes the nature of the study, your role in the study, the measures taken to maintain your confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of the study. Do I have your permission to quote and identify you? [IF NO: Anything you share during this interview will be kept confidential. I will not include your name or any other identifiable information in the report.]

Finally, I plan to record our conversation and I may jot a few notes while we talk. Do you have any questions about the study? Okay, I am going to start recording now.

Prompt Question	Possible Follow up Probes
Looking back on your membership, tell me what stands out for you.	
How did you become a member of [Rotary club or Junior League]?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you join? • Who invited you? • Why did you decide to join? • Were any of your family members or friends involved when you decided to join? • Were you working, unemployed, or in school at the time?
What were your experiences in the first years of membership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At weekly meetings? • At volunteer projects? • On committees? In other leadership positions? • Have your experiences changed over time? • Do you remember an occasion when you felt particularly welcome? Unwelcome? How did that make you feel?
How do you participate in your club?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities? • How often? Most often? • Can you give a more detailed description of this activity? • How do you describe your club and its activities to nonmembers? • Tell me about a memorable time you interacted with a beneficiary of a volunteer event/commitment
How have your experiences changed over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your role in club affairs / activities? How has that changed? • [For Rotary] Do you think your experiences are different than that of men who are members?
Can you reflect on how your membership may have influenced your career and vice versa, if at all?	
[For Junior League]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you reflect on why you may have joined an all-

	women's association rather than a mixed-gender group?
What is the meaning of your membership in your life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [OR] What does your membership mean to you? • What is the value of your membership?
What does volunteering mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, if anything, is the value of volunteering? • What does service mean to you?
For descriptive and comparative purposes, can you tell me:	Your age Your marital status The race by which you identify Your educational background

Anything else you'd like to share related to your experience as a woman in a service club? Thank you for your time

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Letter

Subject: Invitation: Study on Women's experiences in service associations

Dear Ms. ____ ,

Hello. At the suggestion of [contact person], I am contacting you about a research project that I am conducting about the experiences of women in service associations. Among other things, I'm interested in the meanings and values of your volunteering through membership in a service association.

Women from clubs from throughout the Midwest are included in the study, and **I am writing now to invite you to consider participating**. If you are willing to participate, please contact me by email or phone at your earliest convenience. We can schedule an interview at a time and location that is convenient for you.

Participating in my project should not require much of your time. You and I will complete a single interview, approximately 60 minutes in length. After that, I will contact you at a later time to share my transcriptions and ask for clarification if necessary. I may also share some portion of my analysis and conclusions for your input.

If you prefer, your participation in this project will be kept confidential during the research process and in the presentation of the study findings. The study has been approved by the Indiana University Institutional Review Board.

I would be happy to talk about the project by phone or provide more detail via email. If there is any other information you would like to help in your decision about participation, please don't hesitate to ask.

I very much look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sarah Nathan

Sarah Nathan, Doctoral Candidate
Philanthropic Studies
Indiana University

APPENDIX C: List of Participants

Junior League				
	Name	Age	Member Type	Biographical Description
1	Eva	74	Long-time Sustainer	Eva joined Junior League in 1971 as a stay-at-home mother. She chaired the League's annual fundraiser and undertook a major community needs survey. She is now a nonprofit executive and member of the Rotary Club.
2	Beth	74	Long-time Sustainer	Beth joined Junior League after leaving her career as an elementary school teacher to have children and served as League president. She later became a corporate executive and joined the Rotary Club in 1998.
3	Veronica	70	Long-time Sustainer	Veronica joined Junior League in 1965 during the secret admission process. Now retired, she was an active member as both a stay-at-home mother and as she worked outside the home as a teacher.
4	Pamela	late 50s	Long-time Sustainer	Pamela joined Junior League in 1988 while she took time out of her career in university student affairs to be a stay-at-home mother.
5	Olivia	late 50s	Long-time Sustainer	Olivia was an active Junior League member between 1984 and 1992. During this time she was a nonprofit professional. Olivia reduced her involvement with the League when she had young children.
6	Christina	45	Recent Sustainer	Christina joined the League at age 26 and was active for 14 years. She has been a sustaining member for the last 5 years. She is a past president and continues to be highly involved as a community volunteer.
7	Sonya	early 40s	Recent Sustainer	A medical professional, Sonya joined the Junior League after meeting the current president the League's signature annual event. She has been most involved with initiatives to improve member mentoring.
8	Tara	36	Recent Sustainer	Having joined the League at as 22, Tara became a sustaining member at age 30, comparatively young for most members. She used her League experiences to position herself for a career change from the financial industry to the nonprofit sector.
9	Jessica	41	Active	Jessica joined Junior League in 2002 at the urging of her cousin. She is a nonprofit

				executive and was the current president of the League at the time of the interview.
10	Elizabeth	early 40s	Active	Elizabeth joined the League in 2002 and transferred her membership after a career move. She emphasized the membership retention issues facing the League in light of demographic changes.
11	Michelle	early 40s	Active	Michelle has used her Junior League membership to make a career change from corporate to nonprofit work. Her League service has largely concentrated on financial development.
12	Megan	35	Active	Megan joined Junior League right out of college and is a corporate executive in a male-dominated field. At the time of the interview she was in line for the League presidency.
13	Andrea	35	Active	A self-described “rogue Junior League member,” Andrea emphasized the direct service she completed through the women’s prison program. She is a nonprofit professional.
14	Lilith	35	Active	Lilith joined the League at age 29 and is a nonprofit executive. She has been most involved with the League’s community grantmaking.
15	Margaret	32	Active	Margaret reluctantly joined the League at her sister’s suggestion. She emphasized career networking as the greatest benefit of her membership.
16	Natalie	28	Active	Natalie’s mother was a member of Junior League in her hometown. Given her mother’s positive experiences, Natalie sought out the Junior League out of college at age 24. She has been involved in the girls mentoring program and membership retention efforts.
17	Courtney	27	Active	As a member for only six months, Courtney was the newest member of the Junior League interviewed. She had extensive volunteer experiences in college and was especially enthusiastic about the direct service she would complete through the League.
18	Katie	25	Active	Katie was recognized as “Provisional Member of the Year” shortly before she was interviewed for this study. She is a nonprofit professional, intimately involved in the League’s girls mentoring program, and aspires

				to be League president within 10 years.
19	Lucy	25	Former Member	Lucy belonged to the Junior League for less than one year. After trying to transfer her member from one city to another, she ultimately decided to withdraw her application. She is a nonprofit professional.

Rotary Club				
	Name	Age	Member Type	Biographical Description
1	Eva	74	Active	Eva has been a member of the Rotary Club for 17 years and has served on a number of committees and the board of directors.
2	Beth	74	Active	Beth joined the Rotary Club in 1998 at the invitation of her male attorney. She is most active on the club's Rotary Foundation board.
3	Jennifer	70	Active	Jennifer joined Rotary in 1988, among the first class of women to join her club. She was the club's second female president and went on to Rotary District service.
4	Sharon	late 60s	Active	Sharon joined Rotary in the early 1990s and transferred her membership after relocating for her corporate job. She has been most involved in the club's Foundation grantmaking.
5	Linda	63	Active	Linda joined Rotary Club in 1990, has served on the club's board of directors, and is very involved in the club's volunteer projects.
6	Holly	early 60s	Active	Holly joined the Rotary Club in 1998 and has served as club president.
7	Ann	61	Active	Ann is a business owner and member of Rotary since 1992. She was the club's third female president.
8	Chloe	60	Active	Chloe joined Rotary Club in 1997 and transferred in 1999 to a club in a much larger city. She was in line for the presidency at the time of the interview.
9	Stephanie	46	Active	A member for only the past 2 years, Stephanie was the shortest term member among those interviewed. She is currently in line to become club president in 3 years.

APPENDIX D: Reflexive Statement

For eight years, I was a member of Lions Clubs International, although I was active in club activities for only the first two years. It was during those two years that I first became interested in the first women who joined a formerly segregated club. I quickly picked up on the gender dynamics in the club in which I was a minority. I began to sit exclusively at the front, center table because women almost never sat there. I cannot remember why that was particularly important to me at the time or if I was even self-aware enough to articulate my reasons for doing so. Many years later, the research presented in this dissertation is a direct outgrowth of my experiences as a member of Lions. After leaving my hometown for graduate school and for the following six years, I stayed connected to the club through its monthly newsletter and informally through friendships made with fellow members. I also attended two international Lions conventions during this time.

Rotary clubs are quite similar to Lions clubs, so I shared certain general characteristics with some of the women interviewed for this study. And because of my interest in community service and the reputation of the philanthropic studies program, I also shared similar qualities with the women in Junior League. As a professional woman, who was genuinely interested in these women's lives, it was relatively easy to develop rapport that allowed for an open and honest dialogue. In only three interviews, those with women in their 70s, I felt that rapport took more effort to establish. Perhaps due to generational differences, in these three cases, I was careful to express respect for their experiences. Overall, I believe the interviews validated women's experiences – positive and negative – in a meaningful way.

Unless asked explicitly why I was interested in the research topic, I did not tell participants that I was a member of Lions clubs. For the women in Rotary in particular, I did not want my membership in Lions to be perceived as a competing interest since Lions clubs might be considered a rival to Rotary. For the women in Junior League, my experiences in Lions did not seem as relevant and in no way compromised rapport. I found that I had much richer conversations with participants when they did not know of my association with Lions. However, in a couple of interviews there was a moment of slight awkwardness when the participant tried to recruit me to become a member. This happened once with Rotary and a couple of times among Junior League women. When this happened I had to gently deflect the suggestion as something that I ethically could not consider until after my research was complete.

I had a very positive experience in Lions club and it was a place where I thrived. Careful not to let these experiences bias my interaction with participants, I had to consciously probe for certain, perhaps negative, experiences or opinions held by the women. However, through thoughtful reflection in the research journal and maintaining openness, I overcame this potential bias.

In a similar fashion, I had to continually check my own thoughts and opinions so that I was not unfairly critical of the community service provided by the associations. There was a point in the middle of the data collection process that I became disillusioned by the small amount of direct service provided by members. As explained in the findings, the types and amounts of service vary by association and individual member. Even when I thought the service was too little or inadequate, it was critical that the findings presented here are rooted in the data, and, as much as possible, do not reflect my opinion.

So, I come away from this research with a renewed sense of pride in the contributions women make to civic life. As association leaders and community volunteers, their work positively impacts others internal and external to the association's membership. Even in the instances where members have had limited or no interactions with community beneficiaries, membership in a service association generates opportunities for community improvement. And in the cases where the individual member receives more benefits than the community, service associations like those in this study are worthwhile for the sense of purpose and meaning they provide members.

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CURRICULM VITA

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. **Indiana University**
 Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
 Philanthropic Studies, August 2013
- M.A. **Indiana University**
 Philanthropic Studies, 2009
- B.A. **Concordia College, Moorhead, MN**
 Political Science and History Honors, 2001

PUBLICATIONS

- Rooney, Patrick M. and Sarah K. Nathan. 2011. "Contemporary Dynamics of Philanthropy." Pp. 117-124 in *Achieving Excellence in Fundraising*. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tempel, Eugene R. and Sarah K. Nathan. 2010. "Ethical Fundraising." Pp. 44-60 in *Fundraising Principles and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Philanthropic Studies, IUPUI

- PHST P105: "Giving and Volunteering in America" (Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2011)
- PHST P211: "Philanthropy and the Humanities" (Spring 2012)
- PHST P201: "Introduction to Philanthropic Studies" (Fall 2012)
- WOST W105: "Introduction to Women's Studies" (Fall 2012)
- PHST P105 online: Received grant funding for collaborative development of hybrid-online course (Spring 2013)

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Philanthropic Studies

PHIL P542: "Ethics and Values of Philanthropy" (Fall 2012)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"Going Electronic: Online Course Development for College Students Studying Philanthropy." Poster presentation with Dr. Genevieve Shaker. *Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action*. Indianapolis, IN. November 2012.

"Conceptions of Service: Women in Junior League." *Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences*. Gary, IN. October 2012.

"Women in the Indianapolis Rotary Club Since 1987." *Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action*. Toronto, Canada. November 2011.

"Teaching Through Dialogue in Undergraduate Philanthropic Studies." *Nonprofit Academic Centers Council Benchmarks 3.5*. San Diego, CA. March 2011.

"Making 'We Serve' an Inclusive Mission: How the Fargo Lions Club Integrated Women into Full Membership." *Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action*. Washington, D.C.. November 2010.

"Diffusion of Innovation: Women in the Fargo Lions Club." *Workshops in Multidisciplinary Philanthropic Studies*. IUPUI. October 2010.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

PHST P210: Philanthropy and the Social Sciences. Prepared lesson on women in voluntary associations and social capital. (Spring 2013)

COM C223: Business and Professional Communications. Presented lesson on the sectors of society and interpersonal communications across the sectors. (Spring 2012)

PHST P602: Qualitative Research Methods for Third Sector Research. Prepared lesson on phenomenology as a method for giving and volunteering research. (Spring 2012)

PHST P105: Introduction to Giving and Volunteering in America. Collaboratively designed and taught lesson on nonprofit sector responses to education as a social issue. (Spring 2012)

UNIVERSITY SERVICE and LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Dean's Advisory Committee, Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Committee Member, 2012-2013.

IUPUI School of Liberal Arts Dean's Review Committee, Graduate Student Representative, 2012-2013.

Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Action. Conference Planning Committee. 2012.

President, Graduate and Professional Student Government, IUPUI, 2011-2012.

IUPUI Graduate Affairs Committee, Graduate Student Representative, 2011-2012.

IUPUI General Fee Advisory Committee, Graduate Student Representative, 2011-2012.

IUPUI Common Theme Steering Committee, Graduate Student Representative, 2011-2012.

Faculty Advisor, IUPUI Alternative Spring Break, 2011 and 2012.

Philanthropic Studies Academic Programs Committee, PhD student representative, 2009-2011.

IUPUI Sam H. Jones Community Service Scholarship, Selection Committee, 2011.

IUPUI Philanthropic Studies Society, Executive Committee, 2008-2009.

HONORS and AWARDS

Educational Enhancement Grant, IUPUI Graduate School travel grant, Fall 2012.

IUPUI Outstanding Woman Student Leadership Award, 2012.

International Society of Third Sector Research, Doctoral Consortium, 2012.